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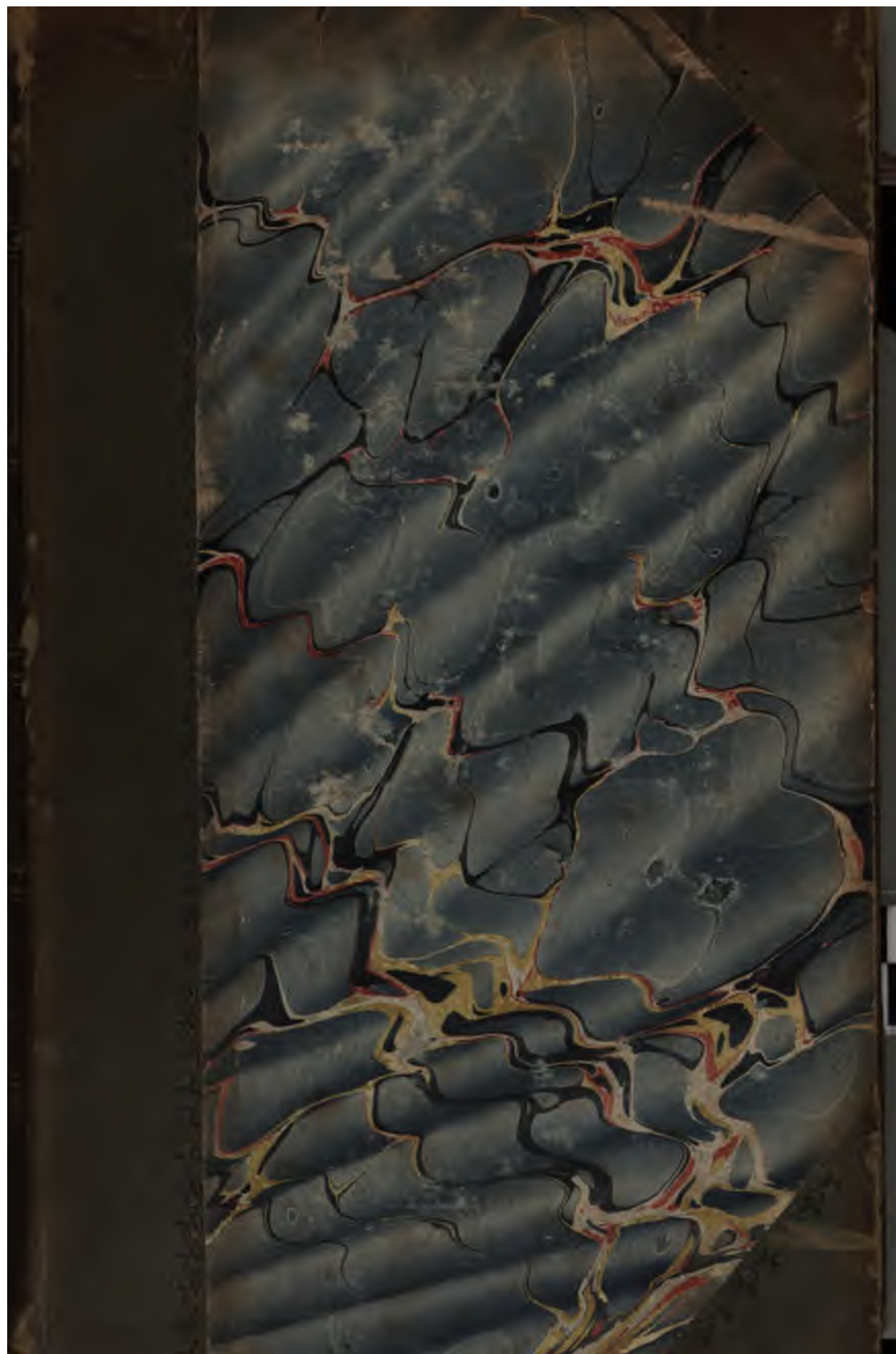
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379.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES
OF THE
APOSTLES, EVANGELISTS,
AND OTHER SAINTS.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES
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APOSTLES, EVANGELISTS,
AND OTHER SAINTS.

Abstract

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Keywords: *Psychiatry*; *Psychology*; *Psychiatrists*; *Psychologists*; *Psychiatric nurses*; *Psychiatric nursing*; *Psychiatric nursing research*

Background: The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of psychiatric nurses and psychiatric nurses-researchers in the area of psychiatric nursing research.

Method: A phenomenological approach was used to explore the experiences of psychiatric nurses and psychiatric nurses-researchers in the area of psychiatric nursing research.

Results: The results of the study revealed that psychiatric nurses and psychiatric nurses-researchers experienced a range of challenges in the area of psychiatric nursing research.

Conclusion: The study highlighted the need for further research in the area of psychiatric nursing research, and the importance of addressing the challenges experienced by psychiatric nurses and psychiatric nurses-researchers.

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11. 1828.
BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES

OF THE

APOSTLES, EVANGELISTS,

AND OTHER SAINTS;

WITH

REFLEXIONS AND COLLECTS;

ADAPTED TO THE

MINOR FESTIVALS

OF THE

UNITED CHURCH OF ENGLAND AND IRELAND.

BY

RICHARD MANT, D.D. M.R.I.A.

BISHOP OF DOWN AND CONNOR.



How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! *Rom. x. 15.*

And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment:

They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented;

(Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. *Heb. xi. 36, 37, 38.*

—◆—
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1828.

379.

TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE AND MOST REVEREND
JOHN GEORGE,
LORD ARCHBISHOP OF ARMAGH,
PRIMATE OF ALL IRELAND AND METROPOLITAN:
IN TOKEN OF SINCERE RESPECT
FOR THE DIGNITY, AFFABILITY, PRUDENCE, AND MODERATION,
WITH WHICH
HE PRESIDES OVER THE IRISH PORTION
OF THE UNITED NATIONAL CHURCH;
AND MORE ESPECIALLY
FOR THE DISCERNMENT, DECISION, AND CHRISTIAN TEMPER,
WITH WHICH, ON A LATE MEMORABLE OCCASION,
HE ASSERTED THE GREAT PROTESTANT PRINCIPLE
OF MAKING THE WRITTEN WORD OF GOD
THE RULE OF RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION;
THE FOLLOWING PAGES ARE INSCRIBED
BY HIS GRACE'S
FAITHFUL AND OBEDIENT
SERVANT AND SUFFRAGAN,
RD. DOWN AND CONNOR.

PREFACE.

THE following publication arose out of a suggestion made to me a considerable time ago, that a work of such a description, as is professed in the title page, composed, not in dialogue after the manner of Mr. Nelson's "Companion to the Festivals," but in narrative, and in a style more suited to the literary taste of the present day, would be acceptable and useful to the publick. I approved of the suggestion, but was prevented by other engagements from adopting it. After the lapse however of several years, finding the want still unsupplied, and feeling myself sufficiently at leisure from official duties, I turned my attention more seriously to the subject, and the result is now offered to publick acceptance.

In the BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES I have endeavoured to give a familiar, compendious, and, so far as circumstances would permit, an authentick account of those holy persons, whom it pleased the divine Providence to employ as his instruments for the first preaching of Christianity to the world, and whom our national Church judges worthy of an annual commemoration. All the information, which the early writers of the Church furnish upon this subject, is to be found in Dr. Cave's "Lives of the Apostles," from which Mr. Nelson derived the materials for the historical part of his "Companion to the Festivals;" and still more fully in Dr. Lardner's Works, especially his "Supplement to the second part of the Credibility of the Gospel history; containing a history of the Apostles and Evangelists, writers of the New Testament." But neither of these works is in the hands, or for the use, of the general reader. Mr. Nelson observed with respect to Dr. Cave, that his "criticisms of the history of the Apostles are more proper to entertain

the curiosity of the learned, than the devotion of well-disposed minds ;” and he accordingly omitted them from his own compilation. A similar observation applies in a still greater degree to the very laborious, learned, and critical collections of Dr. Lardner. These publications therefore appeared by no means to supersede such a work as the present, the object of which, like that of Mr. Nelson, is rather to answer the inquiries, and to encourage the devotion, of the ordinary reader, than to satisfy the deeper views of the theological proficient ; but they at the same time were judged capable of supplying an invaluable fund of materials, out of which such a work as the present might be constructed.

In the construction of my work Dr. Cave’s and Dr. Lardner’s volumes have been of course continually before me. Besides this general acknowledgment of my obligation to them, particular references will frequently be found in the ensuing pages :

for I have for the most part mentioned the author, when any thing was taken which appeared to require special reference ; particularly where citations were made of early writers, quoted through the medium of Dr. Cave or Dr. Lardner. I might indeed have easily given references to the original authors themselves : but I did not wish to burden my page with such references unnecessarily, or to make an ostentatious display of them : conceiving that they would be of little or no use to the kind of readers, for whom my work is principally designed ; and that, if in any case an opportunity of consulting the original document should be desired, it would be supplied through the channel to which reference is given. Use likewise has been occasionally made of other authors, principally ritualists and scriptural commentators ; and they are generally referred to at the time. It may however have occurred now and then, that assistance has been derived and not acknowledged on the particular occasion.

In putting together my materials I have endeavoured to discriminate between such accounts, as appeared well authenticated or probable, and such as appeared to rest on a false or uncertain foundation. Of the former I have spoken with more confidence: of the latter doubtfully or transiently; or have perhaps passed them by in silence.

It will be observed, possibly to the inconvenience of the Reader, that these **BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES** differ from each other in extent; a necessary consequence of the comparatively copious information, which the sacred writings and ecclesiastical history furnish concerning some of the Apostles, and the very scanty mention which they make of others. Whatever convenience might be the result of submitting the notices of St. John, St. Paul, and St. Peter on the one hand, and those of St. Matthias and St. Simon on the other, to the Procrustean operation of reducing or extending them to the same

dimensions; I judged that by such an operation neither justice would be done to my subject, nor satisfaction given to the reasonable curiosity of my readers. Even in the largest however of these notices, I trust that I shall not be thought to have protracted the narrative to an undue length; since it has been my endeavour to limit myself in those instances to as narrow a compass as I considered consistent with the purpose of my undertaking.

The REFLEXIONS, which follow the *Biographical Notices*, are such as have offered themselves to my mind on a contemplation of the character of the individual Saint, or of the incidents in which the sacred history describes him to have been engaged. I hope that the connexion will appear sufficiently obvious: still more, that the two together will be found conducive to the promotion of a sound faith and a correspondent practice.

To this end prayer for the divine grace

is necessary. To the *Notices* therefore and the *Reflexions*, COLLECTS are subjoined, with reference to some of the leading topics which will previously have been submitted to the thoughts of the reader. I have selected prayers from our Liturgy; because I know no better; and because I think and feel, that the more thoroughly the contents of that Book are instilled into a Christian's mind, the more highly it will be prized, and the more excellent will be its effects.

The foregoing particulars formed the original plan of my undertaking. In the progress, or rather towards the end of it, a thought occurred, that a *metrical sketch* of some prominent idea, suggested by the previous narrative or reflexions, might give an interest to the work, and render it more useful, by rendering it more agreeable. The little poems at the end of the different articles, if indeed the term be not misapplied to such effusions, were in consequence annexed. If they produce the de-

sired effect, it is well: at all events they will occupy but a small portion of the time of the reader, as they occupy but little of the book; being each of them comprised within a few lines, unless it be two or three towards the close of the volume, which have been allowed to extend themselves to perhaps an undue length.

Before I conclude this Preface, I wish to make a remark upon a book, to which I have more than once adverted already, and with regard to which I would anticipate any misapprehension in the minds of my readers. I mean Mr. Nelson's "Companion for the Festivals," which I trust that I shall not be thought desirous of depreciating by the present attempt in a course not altogether dissimilar. Since the time of its publication in 1703, that book has enjoyed a circulation, second perhaps to none but the holy Scriptures and the Book of Common Prayer: and it has done during that period, and probably will continue to do, more good in its generation

than almost any other. But the "catechetical form," into which the Author "chose to throw the whole subject of his papers, hoping thereby they might become more universally instructive," does not contribute to render them more alluring and agreeable: his manner also may be deemed somewhat dry, and his style somewhat antiquated, by the more refined, perhaps the fastidious, taste of modern times. And I may be allowed to intimate a doubt, whether in some instances, by the curtailment and abridgment of his materials, he has not diminished the interest of his subject, and withheld from his readers desirable information: and whether in others he has not shewn himself less studious, than might have been wished, of discriminating duly between documents of different authority and value; and thus combined with the best authenticated and most probable history, and placed upon the same apparent footing with it, accounts, uncertain or spurious in their origin, and

in their substance erroneous, or at least open to much question and debate.

But whatever be the merits of Mr. Nelson's work, the greatly increased number of modern readers, as well as the alteration in the taste of the age, may well justify an undertaking, upon the same subject, though after a different manner: the rather as I am inclined to think, that the present undertaking keeps in a great degree clear of Mr. Nelson's, not in manner only, but in the biographical details, and still more in the reflexions. For whilst I have exercised my own judgment in my use of Dr. Cave's work, from which the historical matter in the "Companion for the Festivals" is principally taken, the subsequent researches and observations of Dr. Lardner have opened views, of which the Author of "the Companion" did not enjoy the benefit, but which must be esteemed of great importance towards exhibiting a satisfactory account of the lives of the Apo-

stles and Evangelists : at the same time in my reflexions I have followed a very different course from Mr. Nelson ; so that, although occasionally indebted to him for an useful hint or observation, my work in that particular will be found not to interfere with his.

Upon the whole, though nothing can be more distant from my mind than a desire to depreciate Mr. Nelson's work, such considerations, as I have here submitted, may tend to satisfy the reader, that the present undertaking is not an impertinent and needless intrusion upon ground already fully occupied. With that hope I now leave the undertaking to the candid reception of the publick, adopting in conclusion the sentiment and the language of the pious and excellent author, whose work has been the occasion of these remarks. " If there be any such readers, as shall be prevailed upon by my weak endeavours to become more careful and solicitous about ' the one thing neces-

sary ;' and shall be persuaded or enabled to improve the Holy Seasons of the Church to the advantage of their souls ; let God's holy name have the glory, who was pleased to bless the meanest instrument in so great a work. Let me only beg the favour of their prayers, that when upon such occasions they prostrate themselves at the throne of grace, and approach the holy altars of God, they would in the fervour of their devotions offer up a petition for the unworthy author ; that ' ' among all the changes and chances of this mortal life, his heart may surely there be fixed, where true joys are to be found ;' and that while he is solicitous about the salvation of others, he may not fall short in securing his own."

R. D. AND C.

Jan. 1, 1828.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES
OF THE
APOSTLES, EVANGELISTS,
AND OTHER SAINTS.

ANDREW.

Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.
JOHN vi. 8.

NOTICE OF ST. ANDREW.

As company of the Apostles," which commemorates by a successful festival, is led at the commencement of the ecclesiastical year by him, scripture describes to us by his conduct our blessed Lord, and at the same time his name and his relation to another apostle, as "one of Jesus's disciples, Simon Peter's brother." His festival has been fixed for celebration at this time by reason of the date of his death, which is recorded to have taken place on the 30th of November: or probably it may have been so fixed with reference to the commencement of the ecclesiastical year, by way of an introduction to the season of Advent, and to

announce, as it were, the Advent or Coming of our Lord ; because, as Bishop Sparrow has observed, “ it was he who first came to Christ, and followed him, before any of the other Apostles ; it was he who brought his brother Simon to Christ ; it was he who said, We have found the Messiah^a.”

St. Andrew was a native of Bethsaida, a city of Galilee, situated at the north-eastern extremity of that large body of water, formed by an expansion of the river Jordan, and known in the New Testament by the name of the sea of Galilee or of Tiberias, or the lake of Genesareth. He was the son of a fisherman named Jona, whose trade he followed, and the brother of Simon Peter ; but whether the elder or the younger brother, is not certainly agreed, though the testimony of antiquity, with but slight exception, represents him as the younger^b. But whether he were the elder or the younger, to him certainly belongs the distinction, of having been himself the first follower, and of having introduced Peter to a knowledge, of our Lord.

From the first chapter of St. John’s Gospel we learn, that Andrew had been trained under

^a Bishop Sparrow’s Rationale on the Common Prayer.

^b Dr. Cave’s Lives of the Apostles. Life of St. Peter, s. i. 4.

the discipline of John the Baptist, who had been sent into the world as the forerunner of the promised Saviour, to prepare the way before him by the preaching of repentance, and to give notice of his approach. Standing with another of John's disciples on the banks of the Jordan, while John was baptizing there, his attention was drawn by his master to Jesus as he walked by; and he received a distinct assurance from the Baptist, that this was the promised Redeemer whose coming he had been commissioned to announce: "Behold," said he, "the Lamb of God." The information was not lost upon Andrew and his companion: for they thereupon followed Jesus; and were invited and guided by him to his dwelling, and were permitted to abide with him during the remainder of the day. This circumstance procured for our Apostle from several of the ancients the epithet of "the first-called disciple:" an epithet, if not strictly agreeable to the fact in the judgment of those, who say that he can hardly be said to have been "called" till a later period in company with his brother Simon^c; yet justified in some degree at least by the circumstance of his being recorded as the first of the disciples who sought

^c Dr. Cave. Life of St. Andrew, 2.

Jesus, and was invited and admitted to his dwelling and conversation.

Thus introduced to a knowledge of the Saviour, he did not confine that knowledge to his own breast, but immediately imparted it to his brother in those memorable words, "We have found the Messiah." This circumstance again has not failed to be noticed by the writers of antiquity: for on this account, and with reference to the name, subsequently given by our Lord to Simon, Andrew has been styled, "The rock before the rock;" so that, as Dr. Cave observes, "of all our Lord's Apostles St. Andrew had thus far the honour to be the first preacher of the Gospel^d."

It does not appear that he continued permanently with Jesus after this interview. Probably he accompanied him to Cana, and was one of those "disciples^e," who were invited to the marriage, and whose faith was strengthened by that "beginning of miracles," whereby Jesus there "manifested forth his glory." Probably also he was one of the "disciples^f," who afterwards went with him to Capernaum, and thence to Jerusalem, and "tarried with" him, while he continued in Judea. After some time however, it is plain that both he and

^d Life of St. Andrew, 9. ^e John ii. 2, 11. ^f John ii. 12.

Simon Peter returned to their own home by the sea of Galilee, and to the exercise of their own occupation, in which they were engaged, when, after the lapse of about a year, they were called by our Lord from their employment of fishers, to become, as he emphatically told them, "fishers of men." The occurrence, to which allusion has been already made, as related by St. John, had brought Andrew, and after him his brother Simon, to a personal acquaintance with Jesus, and probably in some degree to a personal attendance upon him: the occurrence, to which allusion is now made, as related more briefly by St. Matthew and St. Mark, and more particularly and fully by St. Luke, occasioned the subsequent attendance upon him of the two brothers to be constant and stated. The occurrence alluded to is that important event which ensued on the miraculous draught of fishes, caused by our Saviour in the presence of Andrew and Simon, the sons of Jona, and of the sons of Zebedee, James and John; whence he took occasion to call them to be his followers, and they, in obedience to his call, "forsook all and followed him."

We thus find Andrew become a regular fol-

² Matt. iv. 18—22. Mark i. 16—20. Luke v. 1—11.

lower of our blessed Lord, separated from his worldly business and relations, and permanently attached to his divine Master's family and service. The assurance, which he had received from John the Baptist, of Jesus being "the Lamb of God," the expected Messiah, had doubtless been confirmed in the interval by the proofs, which had been given of his claim to that character: by the miracles which Andrew had probably witnessed during his temporary attendance on him, at Cana, Capernaum, and, it may be, in Jerusalem also and Judea; and, after "Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee," by the astonishing efficacy of his doctrine, by his healing of divers diseases, and by the authority with which he commanded the unclean spirits; so "that the fame of him went out into every place of the country round about^b." All of these evidences of supernatural power the residence of Andrew and of his brother and companions on the lake of Gennesareth, and their necessary communication and traffick with Capernaum, and the other towns upon the lake, which were the usual scene of the actions of Jesus, must have brought under their observation: and all these favourable impressions must

^b Luke iv. 14.

doubtless have been confirmed by the circumstances of the call itself, by the doctrine which he had delivered to the multitude out of one of their ships, and by the power which he had given to his doctrine, impressing upon their senses a convincing proof of his divine authority by commanding a miraculous draught of fishes in the very place, where they had "toiled all the night, and had taken nothing^k."

From thus becoming a follower of Christ, the next step in Andrew's history is that of his being called to the office and honour of the apostolate; for soon afterwards we find him mentioned by the three first evangelists, as one of the twelve, whom our Lord "chose," and "named apostles," and "ordained," "that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach," "and gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease^l." For what reasons it pleased the Divine wisdom and providence, that so little of the Acts of this Apostle, as of most of his brethren in the apostolate, after his call to that high office, should be recorded by the inspired historians, is a question which admits of no

^k Luke v. 5. See Dean Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels. St. Andrew's day.

^l Matt. x. Mark iii. Luke vi.

very obvious solution. The fact however is evident, that little more is recorded of St. Andrew in the sacred history, except so far as he is comprehended in the general account of the twelve Apostles.

On three occasions indeed he is particularly mentioned : first, as having given notice to Jesus of the lad with five barley loaves and two small fishes, previously to the miraculous feeding of the five thousand^m; then, as having been consulted by Philip concerning the Greeks, who had "come up to Jerusalem to worship at the feast," and who were desirous of seeing Jesus, and as having joined with Philip in procuring their admittance to his presenceⁿ; and, thirdly, as having, together with Peter and James and John, privately inquired of our Lord on the mount of Olives concerning the time of the approaching desolation of Jerusalem and of his own last coming, and as having been thereupon indulged, together with them, with a larger share of his Lord's confidence^o.

But in general he does not appear to have taken a prominent part in the transactions recorded in the New Testament; nor does he appear to have been treated with that distinction, which marks the intercourse of our Saviour with

^m John vi. 6.

ⁿ John xii. 22.

^o Mark xiii. 3.

the other three Apostles, whose call was coincident with his. Probably it is for this reason, that, although he was first brought to the knowledge of Christ, and was invited to his company immediately by Christ himself, whereas his brother Simon received his information afterwards, and that from Andrew, by whom also he was conducted to Jesus, yet it is the manner of the evangelists to speak of Andrew by a term, less honourable personally to him, as "*Simon Peter's brother*:" and that, although he was, together with Simon, called to be a follower of Christ before James and John, the sons of Zebedee, and is also, together with Simon, mentioned before them in some enumerations of the twelve Apostles¹, as if priority of rank had been given to him on their call to the apostolaté, yet in other enumerations he is not distinguished by that mark of honour, but his name is inserted after those of James and John². Certain at least it is, that we do not read of him, that he had the same privilege of being admitted to the confidential intimacy of our Lord, as his brother, and the two sons of Zebedee; nor had he like them from our Lord the distinction of an appropriate surname; the former having been distinguished by the sur-

¹ Matt. x. 2. Luke vi. 14. ² Mark iii. 17, 18. Acts i. 13.

name of Peter, the two latter by that of Boanerges, or the sons of thunder: a distinction indeed, conferred upon them only, and withheld from Andrew in common with the rest of the twelve Apostles.

The last mention, made of our Apostle in the sacred history, occurs after the narrative of our Lord's ascension. Probably indeed he was one of the two disciples, spoken of, but not named, in the 21st chapter of St. John's Gospel^r. However, upon the return of the eleven to Jerusalem, after our Lord's ascension, we find him named with the rest, who assembled together; and "all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren." Together with the other Apostles, he continued then for some years, preaching the Gospel in Judea; until the time came for them to go forth, and spread the knowledge of the Messiah "unto the uttermost part of the earth^s." Upon the dispersion of the Apostles, the lot of St. Andrew appears to have been cast in countries to the north of Judea. There have not indeed been wanting those^t, who have

^r See Dr. Doddridge's note on the place in his Family Expositor.

^s Acts i. 8.

^t Cited in Dr. Cave's Life of St. Andrew.

given a particular account of his travels and ministry, with many historical incidents, and much geographical detail. Such account may be judged to rest on no very ancient or sound authority. It may be sufficient to remark in general, that on the best evidence which we possess his zeal for propagating the Gospel led him through Cappadocia, Galatia, and Bithynia, and along the inhospitable shores of the Euxine sea, to the barbarous regions of Scythia: that thence he returned through Paphlagonia to Byzantium, where by Nicephorus, a patriarch of Constantinople, he is asserted to have instructed the inhabitants in the Christian faith, to have founded a church for divine worship, and to have ordained Stachys, called by St. Paul "his beloved Stachys," first bishop of Byzantium; assertions however, which do not rest upon the credit of high antiquity: that from Byzantium he passed through Thrace, Macedonia, Thessaly, and Greece, and "preached every where" as he went, "the Lord working with him, and confirming the word with signs following;" until at Patræ, a city of Achaia, he at length fell a victim to the rage of Ægeas, proconsul of that country, who was indignant at the success of the Apostle in converting the

^u Rom. xvi. 9.

inhabitants to the faith of Christ, and unable to bring them back to the worship of their false gods.

The instrument of his martyrdom is generally supposed to have been a cross: not of the usual form, but of that form which is commonly designated by his name. It had been his glory to preach the cross; and to the suffering and shame of the cross he was now devoted, not being nailed to it in the customary manner, but tied to it by cords, after having undergone the punishment of scourging, that his death might be more lingering and tedious. In this condition he remained for two days, still enduring his sufferings with resignation and cheerfulness, and still preaching from the cross the heavenly truths for which he suffered; till it pleased the Divine mercy to hear his prayers, to release him from his afflictions, and to permit him to depart in peace and seal the truth of his religion by his death. Thus lived the apostle St. Andrew; and thus he died: a faithful follower of a crucified Saviour throughout his life; and a faithful follower of Him even to the moment, and in the very nature and instrument, of his death.

REFLEXIONS.

WE have thus taken a view of the history of St. Andrew: we now proceed to such reflexions as the history may suggest for our improvement.

Andrew, the first disciple of Christ, the first person who is recorded as having been brought to a knowledge and confession of the Saviour, had been in the first place a disciple of John the Baptist. This concurrence of incidents may be well deemed to have proceeded from the special providence of God. It shews the wisdom of God, in that "the messenger" was not sent in vain to "prepare the way of the Lord." It shews the efficacy of that moral discipline, which was taught in the school of the Baptist, namely, that the practice of repentance, and the "bringing forth of fruits meet for repentance," are an admirable introduction to Christian faith. Moreover it shews the connexion between the Mosaical and the Christian dispensations, thus associated by this intermediate link; forasmuch as he, who was in future to be devoted to the great Prophet of the Gospel, was introduced to his service by the last prophet under the Law.

* Mal. iii. 1. Mark i. 2.

To this first disciple Jesus was at once made known by the Baptist as “the Lamb of God;” “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” What was this but for him to be made known under the notion of an expiatory sacrifice for human sins? Neither the Baptist, who used the language, nor the disciple who heard it, could have understood it in any other sense, inured as their minds were to the provisions of the Levitical law, and to the daily offerings of the altar founded thereupon. Besides, such language, thus understood, was quite at harmony with the customary preaching of the Baptist. He “preached the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins;” and he now specified the manner in which repented sins were to be forgiven. Let the idea, under which Jesus was set before the eyes of this his first disciple, never be absent from ours! Let us never fail to behold him, as “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!” or, as the Evangelist St. John illustrates the expression of the Baptist, as “the propitiation for our sins: and not for our’s only, but also for the sins of the whole world!”

Andrew, thus apprized of the person of Jesus,

^s 1 John ii. 2.

followed him for the purpose of learning his dwelling, and of being admitted to his acquaintance and conversation. Jesus perceived his purpose, and invited and admitted him to his dwelling, and suffered him and his companion to "abide with him that day." What an encouragement to us to do as Andrew did! When did any one follow Jesus, and not receive encouragement to go on? When did any one seek him, and not find him? When did any one inquire for his abode, and fail of being received into it, and treated with kindness greater than he could either desire or deserve? Let us not forget to follow him continually, and to seek him where even now he at all times vouchsafes to dwell, and whither he perpetually invites us to dwell with him, in his own house, in the services of his ministers, in the preaching of his word, in the administration of his sacraments, in the graces and virtues of a sober, righteous, and godly life; and we shall not fail of finding him, of being admitted into his presence, and of enjoying his communion and converse.

When Andrew had thus discovered the Saviour, and been received into his abode, did he conceal the discovery in his own breast, and enjoy it in selfish solitude and abstraction? Surely not. He imparted it to his brother

without delay. "We have found the Messiah," said he to Simon; "and he brought him to Jesus." True piety, as well as true benevolence, is of a communicative nature: the blessings, the delight, which it experiences itself, it is desirous of dispensing to others. Enjoying, as it does enjoy, the light of God's countenance shining upon its own tabernacle, it feels additional pleasure in believing that others are as highly favoured and as happy as itself. It rejoices on its own account; it rejoices also with and for them that rejoice: and has a manifold return of thanks to make to God for such a multiplication and extension of his goodness and glory. If Andrew exulted in having made discovery of the Messiah, who can question but that his exultation was heightened and increased by participating it with his brother? Let us not deem that the spiritual blessings which we enjoy, the religious knowledge which has been vouchsafed to us, have been bestowed for ourselves alone; what we have freely received of the knowledge of the Saviour and of the grace of God, let us freely give to others! Let us, like Andrew, bring our brethren also to Jesus, and cause them to be partakers of his fellowship, and to concur with us in acknowledging God's mercy and in uttering forth his praise!

It is remarkable that Andrew, in announcing to his brother his recent joyful discovery, describes Jesus by a different term from that under which he had received a description of him from the Baptist. "We have found the Messiah;" the Evangelist adds, "which is, being interpreted, the Christ," or the anointed: specially, in this application of the name, the anointed of God; the promised Saviour; anointed to the high offices of Prophet, Priest, and King of God's redeemed. In this capacity again, let us not fail to acknowledge the object of Andrew's faith: nor let us fail to remember, that he, who in the language of Andrew to Peter is the Messiah or the Christ, is likewise in the language of Peter himself "the Christ, the Son of the living God;" consubstantial with God, the co-eternal Son of the eternal Father.

Andrew, having become a disciple of Christ, returned nevertheless to his ordinary occupation, and was diligently employed in the duties of it, when he was afterwards called to be a constant attendant upon our Lord. Idleness in the proper duties of our station and profession in life is no recommendation of us to God's notice and favour. The disciple of Christ is

* Matt. xvi. 16.

commanded to "study to be quiet and to do his own business, and to work with his own hands^a." As we ought not to suffer our worldly calling to make us negligent in doing the work of the Lord by due attention to our religious exercises, so we may be assured, that the Lord never intends that by doing his work we should be made negligent in doing the particular duty of that state of life, to which it hath pleased him to call us. When most diligently employed in the proper duties of our station, always understanding that those duties do not preclude us from the discharge of the duties which we owe immediately to God, we have then most reason to be assured that we enjoy the divine favour and blessing.

From his secular business however Andrew was now called for a special purpose to be the constant attendant and follower of Jesus; and in obedience to the call, he together with his companions "forsook all and followed him." What shall we say now of their conduct in this respect? What indeed can we reasonably say, but that having been witnesses of the most wonderful acts performed by the word of Jesus, acts plainly surpassing all human power to perform them, acts unequivocally performed to the

^a 1 Thess. iv. 11.

senses of the beholders, and upon the reality of which the senses were capable of deciding; that being themselves in full possession of their senses, and therefore not liable to be deceived, if indeed it were possible to suppose a purpose of deceiving them; that being endowed with sound understandings and sobriety of mind, and therefore not liable to be hurried away by a frantick zeal or a blind enthusiasm; and having withal no temptation to espouse the cause of Jesus, except on the supposition of their conviction of its goodness, but on the contrary having every worldly motive to renounce it; they were constrained by the resistless evidence of truth to acknowledge him for their Lord, and to submit themselves implicitly and exclusively to his direction? How lovely and exemplary was their obedience in "forsaking all and following" the blessed Jesus! How firm and immoveable is the foundation, which they have left by their obedience, for the resting-place of our Christian faith! How forcible is the example which they have set us for "forsaking all and following" Christ, if he should ever see fit to call us to a surrender of our temporal possessions for his sake; at all events, for "forsaking all" things which impede us in the course of our Christian calling, and for

“following” him in purity of heart, and righteousness and holiness of life!

Andrew had been before a disciple of Jesus. He was now become his constant follower and attendant; and so he was in the way of being qualified for the performance of the high office of a preacher of the Gospel, which his Lord intended that he should bear. But in order to his due discharge of that office, a special appointment to it was requisite; and so he was “called and chosen” from among the other disciples, to be one of “the twelve whom our Lord also named Apostles,” and was “ordained and sent forth” to preach the Gospel to the world. “Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved,” saith St. Paul in the epistle for this day. But, as he proceeds, “how then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent? As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things^b!” Whence it appears, that as believing in the Lord is necessary

^b Rom. x. 13, 14, 15.

in order to calling upon him, and as hearing is necessary in order to believing, and as preaching is necessary in order to hearing ; so also for the preacher himself it is necessary that he be sent. A man may be trained in the school of Christ, he may be admitted into Christ's family, and become his stated and regular follower, but he is not thereby qualified to become " a minister of Christ and a steward of the mysteries of God^c." However otherwise qualified by personal holiness and religious zeal, " no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron," and the Levitical priesthood under the Law, and Andrew and the Apostles under the Gospel, and after them such as derive their office from them by regular transmission, being " lawfully called and sent to execute the same. And those we ought to judge lawfully called and sent, which be chosen and called to this work by men who have publick authority given unto them in the congregation to call and send ministers into the Lord's vineyard^e." Then may we reasonably hope, that the ministration of the preacher will, like that of Andrew, be in its due degree blessed by the Lord, when, like that of Andrew, it is

^c 1 Cor. iv. 1.

^d Heb. v. 4.

^e Art. xxiii.

undertaken by the Lord's authority and appointment.

But in adverting to the success of the ministry of our Apostle and his brethren in the Apostolate, how can we sufficiently admire the divine wisdom and power in the choice of such men for the propagation of the Gospel through the world ! The blessed Jesus appeared on earth for the purpose of subjecting it to the belief and profession of a new religion. And what was his appearance ? A person, of a despised nation, of humble parentage, of a mean trade, of indigent circumstances, destitute of every recommendation of human rank, or knowledge, or opulence, or power. And whom did he select to be his instruments for this stupendous work ? The high-born prince ? the aspiring warrior ? the subtle politician ? the acute philosopher ? the rich, the wise, the mighty, the noble ones of the earth ? Nay ; but he chose the simple fisherman, the industrious tent maker, the despised publican ; men, scorned as Jews by the rest of mankind, and as the meanest, and in some cases as the worst, of the Jews by the Jews themselves. “Ye see your calling, brethren,” saith St. Paul, “how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called : but God hath chosen

the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are." And so the Gospel of God went forth conquering and to conquer, triumphing over the prejudices, the superstitions, the pride, the selfishness of the world; over the stubbornness of the Jew, the learning of the Greek, the ignorance of the barbarian, the more than barbarian savageness of the Scythian, to whom our Apostle was commissioned to "do the work of an evangelist," and the power and grandeur of imperial Rome; "that no flesh should glory in his presence," and that "our faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."

Such reflexions may appear not unfit to occupy our minds on this festival of "the holy Apostle St. Andrew," the first called of the disciples, one of the first called of the Apostles, of our blessed Lord. And that these reflexions may produce their due effect upon our minds and hearts, let us offer our prayers in conclusion for the divine blessing; adopting for that purpose the language, provided upon this and

upon some other occasions in the Liturgy of our apostolical and scriptural Church.

Collect for the day.

“ALMIGHTY God, who didst give such grace to thy holy Apostle St. Andrew, that he readily obeyed the calling of thy Son Jesus Christ, and followed him without delay: Grant unto us all, that we, being called by thy holy word, may forthwith give up ourselves obediently to fulfil thy holy commandments; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord. *Amen.*”

Collect for the second Sunday after Easter.

“ALMIGHTY God, who hast given thine only Son to be unto us both a sacrifice for sin, and also an ensample of godly life; Give us grace that we may always most thankfully receive that his inestimable benefit, and also daily endeavour ourselves to follow the blessed steps of his most holy life; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord. *Amen.*”

The second Collect for Good Friday.

“ALMIGHTY and everliving God, by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church is governed and sanctified; Receive our supplications and prayers which we offer before thee for all

estates of men in thy holy Church, that every member of the same, in his vocation and ministry, may truly and godly serve thee; through our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

The first Collect in the Ember weeks.

"ALMIGHTY God, our heavenly Father, who hast purchased to thyself an universal Church by the precious blood of thy dear Son; Mercifully look upon the same, and so guide and govern the minds of thy servants, the Bishops and Pastors of thy flock, that they may lay hands suddenly on no man, but faithfully and wisely make choice of fit persons to serve in the sacred ministry of thy Church. And to those which are ordained to any holy function give thy grace and heavenly benediction, that both by their life and doctrine they may set forth thy glory, and set forward the salvation of all men; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*"

Who leads the glorious company

The Apostles' sainted band?

First on the roll of duty see

The holy ANDREW stand.

He first the promised Saviour sought

Within his low abode;

And whom he found, to others taught,

The Christ and Lamb of God.

One of his disciples, &c.

And he, among the first, the call
To tend his Lord obey'd;
Forsook his ship, his home, his all;
And follow'd where he led.

“Fisher of men,” by night, by day,
His ready toils he set;
Intent to close his captive prey
Within the Gospel net:

Nor scrupled he to yield his breath,
By many a labour tried,
And die with willing mind the death
By which his Master died.

And now his name with service meet
Leads on the sacred year:
And bids the Church prepare to greet
The Saviour's Advent near.

ST. THOMAS.

Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus.

JOHN XX. 24.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE OF ST. THOMAS.

THE second Saint, whom the Church commemorates in the course of the ecclesiastical year, is Thomas the Apostle and Martyr. St. Andrew is supposed to be the first, because the first called to the knowledge of Christ. With reference to which it has been remarked by Mr. Wheatley, that "St. Thomas's day seems to be placed next, not because he was the second that believed Jesus to be the Messiah, but the last that believed his resurrection: of which though he was at first the most doubtful, yet he had afterwards the greatest evidence of its truth; which the Church recommends to our meditation at this season, as a fit preparative to our Lord's Nativity. For unless we believe with St. Thomas, that the same Jesus, whose birth we immediately after commemorate, is the ve

Christ, 'our Lord and our God,' neither his birth, death, nor resurrection will avail us any thing."

Whether or not much weight be due to this argument for the early celebration of St. Thomas's day, the martyrologies notice the death of the Apostle on the 21st of December, which is his festival in the West^a: and it is plain that in several cases the order of arrangement is not founded on any such consideration. Indeed, if the fact be, as it is elsewhere and upon good authority stated by Bishop Sparrow, that the festivals are generally celebrated on the supposed day of the death of the Saint then commemorated, called by the ancients his birth-day, as being that whereon he was born a citizen of heaven, of the Church triumphant, we need not look further for the reason of the place which any individual holds in the calendar, than to the time when his death is supposed to have occurred: so that the day appropriated to the commemoration of St. Thomas may be founded on an historical and chronological reason, rather than on a theological one. And this remark may be borne in mind, as applying to the greater part of the other Saints commemorated in our yearly services.

^a Calmet's Dictionary.

The Saint of this day is spoken of by St. John, as "Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus;" that is, the twin, or the twin-brother: such being the signification of the two names, the former in the Hebrew, the latter in the Greek language. In which language he bore the latter name, according to a custom which prevailed amongst the Jews, when travelling into foreign countries, or familiarly conversing with Greeks and Romans, to assume to themselves a Greek or Latin name of great affinity, and sometimes of the very same signification, with that of their own country^b. Perhaps Thomas was a native of some place inhabited both by the Jews and Greeks, such as was the region of Decapolis; and so the Jews called him by his Hebrew, and the Greeks by his Greek, name.

Of the country and family of Thomas the history of the Gospel gives no particular information. From a passage in St. John's 21st chapter it is probable that he was a fisherman on the sea of Tiberias, as it is there called, or the sea of Galilee or lake of Gennesareth. It is also probable that he was associated with Peter and Andrew and the two sons of Zebedee, together with whom he is on that occasion described, as engaged after our Lord's resurrec-

^b Dr. Cave's Life of St. Thomas.

tion in following the business of their calling. Thus he may have been at first brought to a knowledge of our Saviour through his connexion with them. But we are uninformed of every particular concerning his conversion and his early following of Jesus; the first occurrence of his name in the sacred history being in the catalogue of the twelve Apostles, as one of whom he is mentioned by the three first Evangelists, but without any special mark of distinction^c.

Nor in the progress of the sacred history is he much distinguished from the rest of the twelve. By the three Evangelists, who notice his call to the apostleship, he is not again mentioned except by St. Luke in his enumeration of the eleven who were present at our Lord's ascension^d. St. John alone relates any particulars concerning him.

On the first occasion of his being so mentioned, he is distinguished in a manner which reflects honour upon him for his zealous and intrepid attachment to his Master: for when, after the death of Lazarus, the other disciples dissuaded Jesus from going, as he purposed, into Judea, lest the Jews, who "had of late sought to stone" him, should repeat their mur-

^c Matt. x. 3. Mark iii. 18. Luke vi. 15.

^d Acts i. 13.

derous attempt, Thomas professed his readiness to attend upon his Master, and encouraged his fellow-disciples to the same noble resolution, by saying, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

But if upon this occasion he was distinguished for the goodness and honesty of his heart, he was upon another less favourably marked by the dulness of his apprehension, and his want of spiritual discernment; for such appears to be the character of his language, when in answer to our Lord's assurance to his disciples a short time before his death, that "in his Father's house were many mansions," that he was "going to prepare a place for them," and that he would "come again and receive them unto himself," accompanied by his affirmation, "And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know;" the consolatory promise and assertion of the Master were met by an avowal of ignorance on our Apostle's part, "Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?"

A third and a still more memorable occasion, on which this Apostle is presented to our notice, is that which is alluded to in the Collect, and related in the Gospel, for the day; namely, his

* John xi. 16.

† John xiv. 5.

"doubtfulness in our Lord's resurrection:" an occasion, memorable indeed, whether we consider, as we shall presently proceed to consider, his refusal to believe the testimony of the other disciples, that "they had seen the Lord;" or the sensible testimony which he required for the foundation of his own faith; or the vast condescension and benignity of our Lord in granting the required proof; or the signal and most illustrious confession of his faith, thereupon uttered by the Apostle; or the manner in which his Lord accepted and replied to that confession^g. Convinced by what he then saw and heard, our Apostle no more doubted. On other occasions however he was again admitted to the sight and conversation of his Lord; on one he is mentioned by name, as among certain disciples to whom "Jesus shewed himself^h;" on others he is included in the number of the eleven. Together with his brethren in the apostleship he was present at the last appearance of our Lord on earth; and partook of his final benediction; and "worshipped him;" and "beheld, while he was taken up," till "a cloud received him out of their sightⁱ:" and together with them he "gave with great power

^g John xx. 24—29.

^h John xxi. 2.

ⁱ Acts i. 9, 13. Luke xxiv. 52.

witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus^k, who had thus “ shewed himself alive to them after his passion by many infallible proofs.”

Upon the dispersion of the Apostles to preach the Gospel “ to the uttermost parts of the earth,” the lot of St. Thomas appears to have been cast in the eastern regions. The province assigned to him, as we are informed by Origen in the third century, was Parthia: after which we learn from the ecclesiastical historian Eusebius, and other ancient writers, that he published the doctrine of a crucified and risen Saviour to the Medes, the Persians, the Carmanians, the Hyrcanians, the Bactrians, and other neighbouring nations. In Persia he is said to have met with the Magi, who brought presents to the new-born Saviour; to have baptized them; and to have taken them with him as his companions and assistants in the propagation of the Gospel. Chrysostom in the fourth century intimates, that he preached with success in Ethiopia, namely, in the Asian Ethiopia, bordering on, if not the same as, Chaldea; and by Gregory Nazianzen an author of about the same period, by Jerome, and by others of the fathers, he is alleged to have spread his doctrine over the country of the Brahmins, along the coasts of

^k Acts iv. 33.

the great Indian Peninsula, and in the islands of the Indian seas¹.

The intercourse opened with India by the commercial enterprises of the Portuguese in the fifteenth century has been thought to corroborate the statements of these early Christian writers concerning the propagation of the Gospel in that country by St. Thomas, "partly from ancient monuments and writings, and partly from constant and uncontrolled traditions, which the Christians, whom they found in those parts, preserved amongst them^m." A race of Christians has been ascertained to exist in India, not far from the coasts of Malabar, and amongst the hills at the bottom of the great mountains of Malayalaⁿ, unquestionably of very high antiquity, and claiming their spiritual descent from our Apostle. Proofs of his having visited their country, and established in it the faith of the Gospel, are alleged under different forms. The name which they bear of the Christians of St. Thomas, is supposed to have been derived from the Apostle. At Cranganore tradition designates the spot, where

¹ For more particulars the reader is referred to Dr. Cave's Life of St. Thomas.

^m Dr. Cave.

ⁿ Dr. Buchanan's Christian Researches in India.

he first landed on the Indian soil. At Paroor the church, which is said to be the most ancient in Malabar, is distinguished by his name. Inscriptions are related to have been found recording his mission by the Son of God into those countries, to instruct them in the knowledge of the true God. And memorials of him are preserved in their sacred rites, which they assert to have been derived from the very time of the Apostle; especially in their solemn celebration of the Sunday after Easter, as commemorative of the noble confession which St. Thomas then made of Christ^p. It must not however be concealed, that whatever support these circumstances may appear to lend to the previous narration of India having been one of the scenes of our Apostle's ministry, there have not been wanting those who have contended, that these circumstances are delusive; and particularly that the name which distinguishes these Indian Christians is derived from another holy man, a Syrian of the name of Thomas, to whom indeed they are indebted for their knowledge of Christianity, but at a time some centuries later than that of our Apostle^p.

The uncertainty, which hangs over the travels

^p See for these particulars Dr. Cave's *Life of St. Thomas*, and Dr. Buchanan's *Christian Researches*.

^p Dean Stanhope on the *Epistles and Gospels*.

of St. Thomas, naturally extends itself to the place and particulars of his death. It has however been generally received, that he fell a victim to the malice of the Brahmins, who found their idolatry endangered by his preaching; and that he was thrust through with a lance by one of their followers at the instigation of the priests, near Malipur, a city of Coromandel, where he had lately caused a church to be erected for divine worship. His body was taken up by his disciples, and buried in the same church. And though the Greeks contend that it was carried to Edessa, a city in Mesopotamia, where great honour has been always paid to his memory, yet the Christians of the East constantly affirm it to have remained in the place of his martyrdom. If India was the scene of his ministry, it may reasonably be thought to have been also the scene of his death and burial: and many particulars, related upon those subjects, carry in themselves an appearance of probability, though they are mixed up with others of a superstitious nature, which exceed the bounds of rational belief^a.

No writings remain to us of the composition of this Apostle. A Gospel was attributed to him in the early ages of Christianity; but it is reprobated by Eusebius, together with some

^a They may be seen in Dr. Cave's Life of the Apostle.

other forgeries of hereticks attributed to other Apostles, with this judgment, that they are not so much as to be reckoned among the spurious, but are to be rejected as altogether absurd and impious^r.

REFLEXIONS.

IN reflecting upon the life and character of St. Thomas, we may first admire his fortitude and fidelity, in encouraging his fellow-disciples to accompany Jesus to Judea, even though the journey should lead to their death in company with him; "Let us also go that we may die with him:" a proposal, which seems to have been made in the honesty and simplicity of his heart; and of which the most natural and obvious as well as the best interpretation appears to be, Though this purposed journey of our Lord may and probably will conduct him to his death, let us not forsake him, but attend him rather through all his difficulties and dangers even to the last fatal extremity^s. And surely such a proposal reflects honour upon the affection, courage, and holy resolution of the Apostle: at the same time it offers him as an example for our imitation, and admonishes us to resolve likewise to adhere stedfastly to our Saviour, and never to desert him however we may

^r Dr. Lardner's Credibility.

^s Dean Stanhope.

be beset with difficulties and threatened with dangers for our adherence. If the same Apostle was afterwards one of those, who in the time of trial "forsook him and fled," the failure of his courage may prompt us to deplore the inconstancy and frailty of human nature, and its ignorance of its own insufficiency, even when its intentions are the best: and it may accordingly prompt us to "watch and pray that we enter not into temptation," or may have strength that we may be able to bear it; and especially to beseech our "holy and merciful Saviour," that he will "suffer us not," either "at our last" or at any intervening "hour," for any terrors or "for any pains of death to fall from Him."

2dly, The ignorance professed by St. Thomas, concerning the place whither our Lord was going, and the way which led to it, shews a dulness of apprehension, and a want of spiritual discernment, the result of those worldly prepossessions which clung generally to the Apostles during our Lord's ministry. They expected him to establish a temporal kingdom. And it is probable that St. Thomas, under the influence of this delusion, supposed it to be our Lord's intention to remove to some splendid earthly mansion, fit for the reception and abode of a powerful sovereign¹. Careful attention

¹ Dr. Doddridge's Family Expositor.

to our Lord's own declarations might have dissipated the delusion; and enabled him to see clearly the spiritual nature of our Lord's pretensions, and the true tendency of his language. Taught by his error, let us endeavour to liberate our minds from those prepossessions and prejudices, which are apt to cloud and obscure their discernment of religious truth. Let us devote ourselves to a dispassionate, unprejudiced, and impartial contemplation of God's holy word. And profiting by the answer, which the blessed Jesus graciously returned to the Apostle's profession of ignorance, let us not fail to regard him as "the way, the truth, and the life;" the way to guide us, the truth to enlighten us, and the life to animate us, in our search after happiness; the avenue, by which alone any man can come into the Father's presence, whither he is gone before, and whither it behoves us to labour diligently to follow.

3dly, We pass on to the incredulity of our Apostle on the subject of our Lord's resurrection. Jesus had shewn himself to his disciples after his resurrection, and his disciples had related it to Thomas, "who was not with them when Jesus came." But how did he receive their relation? "The other disciples said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print

of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe." Strange declaration! why should he refuse to believe? What room could there have been for mistake on the part of the other Apostles? What motive could they have had for misinforming and misleading him? Why should he doubt their capability of judging? why their veracity in relating? Rather, why should he not give full credit to their assertion of an event, which, wonderful as it was in itself, was at the same time at harmony with the wonderful works which he had continually seen his Lord perform, and agreeable to the promise of rising again from the dead, which he had repeatedly heard his Lord deliver? Did the fact related bely the assurances of divine wisdom? did it exceed the compass of divine power? Thus the incredulity of Thomas betrays a want of reliance on the discernment or integrity of his brethren, and a backwardness in admitting truth upon sufficient testimony, together with a want of faith in the perfections of his Lord, which, especially in a person possessed of his opportunities of forming a better judgment, cannot but be esteemed worthy of no inconsiderable degree of blame.

But it was productive of valuable results. One of these is the very narrative itself of the

occurrence ; for it is a proof of the candour and sincerity, of the simplicity and fidelity, of the Evangelist, that he has recorded an event of this kind, little creditable as it is to one of the Apostles of our Lord, and little calculated to recommend to the world the testimony of the others. But so it is : and so we find it to be in other instances, that the sacred historians appear little solicitous of what may be the effect of their statements, whilst they state openly and distinctly the transactions, of which they were witnesses. Thus the meanness of the condition of the four first called Apostles, and the offensive character of that of Matthew ; the ambition and intemperate zeal of the two sons of Zebedee, the worldly prepossessions of the twelve in general, and their mutual contentions for pre-eminence, the treachery of Judas, the denial of Peter, the desertion and flight of the rest, their subsequent "unbelief and hardness of heart," the dulness of apprehension which has been already noticed in Thomas, and now his incredulity and disbelief, are recorded in the Gospels without disguise or reserve. Whatever discredit they may have been calculated to bring on the Apostles and on their religion, whilst the narrators employ no means to aggravate the offence, they take no care to excuse or extenuate it, or to bespeak the indulgence of the reader in its behalf. A plain,

unadulterated, unmutated statement of facts was the evident object of their labours: and conscious that they spake nothing but the truth themselves, they were contented to leave their testimony to operate as it might upon the minds of others.

In this respect the "doubtfulness" of St. Thomas "in our Lord's resurrection" may be thought to tend "to the more confirmation of the truth," as the Collect for the day expresses it; by leading us to appreciate more justly and more highly the character of the sacred historians. But it has the same tendency in a more direct manner. The incredulous Apostle had declared, "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe." The benevolent Saviour had compassion on the weakness of the well-intentioned but ill-judging man: and accordingly at his next appearance amongst his disciples, after eight days, when "Thomas was with them," having first addressed them all in general with the gracious salutation "Peace be unto you," he turned in particular to the over-scrupulous unbeliever, and he saith unto Thomas, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing." Thus the

person of the crucified Saviour, the pierced hands and the wounded side, were submitted to the closest scrutiny; and his reality and identity were proved by that specifick trial of the senses, which Thomas, instead of being satisfied with the general testimony of his brethren, sufficient as that testimony might well have been esteemed by any rational inquirer, had so unreasonably prescribed for the rule of his belief.

What support and strength must have been thus administered to the faith of those, who had previously believed! What conviction must have prevailed over the doubts of him who had believed not! What an expressive comment does the transaction supply upon the language of the Evangelist in the commencement of his first epistle, "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life; ***** That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you." And what "confirmation of the faith" can we possibly desire more perfect than this; namely, that a fact so important as the event of our Lord's resurrection, in common with the other facts of the Gospel history, should have been unreservedly witnessed and carefully weighed and examined by

competent and unexceptionable observers, and afterwards should be delivered unto us by them "who from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word^a." It has been well observed upon this transaction by Dr. Doddridge, that one of the most subtle of modern objectors "could find out no more plausible objection against this evidence of the resurrection of Christ, than to say that the disciples were deceived in what they imagined they saw, heard, and felt: which, if granted, would be in effect to allow, that no men could be competent judges of any fact whatsoever relating to their own sensations, and consequently would overthrow all human testimony in courts of judicature and elsewhere."

But how amiable, how venerable, how adorable were the benignity and condescension of our Lord in vouchsafing to the incredulous Apostle the very proof which he required! Truly, had he chosen to leave him to the consequences of his incredulity, who could have found fault? who could have wondered? He had given him evidence enough to convince him in the plain and unbiassed testimony of his brethren; such testimony, as was judged and as was proved sufficient for the conversion of an unbelieving

^a Luke i. 2.

world. If Thomas failed of being convinced, the defect was on his part, not on that of our blessed Lord. Nevertheless he graciously "helped the unbelief" of the weak Apostle. He gave him the evidence, all that he desired and more than he deserved, to banish from his mind all scruple and doubtfulness. He reached forth his hand, marked as it was with the signs of the price paid for our salvation, to rescue and to save him, sinking and about to perish in the waves of unbelief, and brought him safe unto the haven where he would be. O! let us therefore praise the Lord for his goodness; and magnify that mercy which pitied the error and infirmity of his froward servant, and has assured us by this example, as he perpetually assures us by his word, that "it is not his will that any of his little ones should perish."

The effect is an abundant source of satisfaction and delight. The sight and address of Jesus; the sight, whereby he was identified with the Apostle's well-known Master; the address, which by a repetition of the very words uttered by the Apostle testified the omniscience of the speaker; convinced the doubtful disciple. They at once dispersed his scruples; they caused him to be "no longer faithless, but believing;" they filled him at once with a holy faith, and they prompted him to pour forth his faith in the

language of humble confession or devout adoration; for "Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God."

No mere expression this of astonishment and surprise; no fond ejaculation of admiration; no extravagant effusion of feeling, indistinct and indefinite. It was an "answer" to the person, who in the preceding words had addressed himself to the Apostle: it was an address in return to that very person himself: it was an invocation, of which that person was the object, or an affirmation, of which he was the subject: so that whether we understand the Apostle as saying, O Thou my Lord and my God, or, Thou art my Lord and my God, the words are a most illustrious acknowledgment of the dominion and deity of the person to whom they are addressed. "I call this the noblest confession," observes Dean Stanhope, "because the Catholick interpreters of Scripture have understood by it, that St. Thomas did not only recognise Jesus for the Messiah, the very same Lord to whom he had been a servant and companion during the space of his ministry; but that he moreover owned his divine nature, and drew the consequence to himself, which St. Paul did afterwards to the Romans, that 'the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, and the power' he exerted in it, did abundantly 'declare

him to be the very Son of God.' * * * So mighty, so sudden a change do we find in this Apostle, that the person, of whom so lately he could not be prevailed upon to think otherwise than as a dead man, lost to all hopes, all possibility, of returning, he now admires and adores, as the Almighty and the Everliving God."

But what was our Lord's conduct, what was his language, upon this momentous occasion? Does he reprove the Apostle for addressing to him these lofty appellations? Does he reject the application of the appellations to himself? Does he say, "See thou do it not;" see thou speak not to me in such terms as these: I am not thy Lord; I am not thy God: I am a mere man as thou art; at the best I am but a celestial, an angelical creature? We hear no approach to reproof of the Apostle for the extravagance of his salutation: we hear no traces of a rejection of the salutation in our Saviour's reply: we hear no denial of his claim to the titles thus attributed to him. On the contrary we perceive him listening with complacency to the tribute of veneration tendered by the Apostle, and we hear him remarking upon his conversion with a dignity, and pronouncing a benediction upon others with an authority, well becoming (as we humbly suppose) his communion in the divine nature. "Thomas, because thou

hast seen, thou hast believed : blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." Admitting the language of St. Thomas to be correctly represented above, (and it were difficult indeed rationally to represent it otherwise;) admitting it, that is, to bear properly the signification of attributing sovereignty and divinity to the blessed Jesus, the reply of Jesus cannot be otherwise understood, than as an acceptance of the homage and an appropriation of the attributes to himself.

But there is another view to be taken of our Saviour's reply, with particular reference to the occurrence which gave occasion to the dialogue. Forbearing with his characteristic mildness to utter any reproof of the Apostle for his previous incredulity, he still takes occasion to intimate that his faith would have been more excellent, if he had believed without such sensible and demonstrative evidence ; and to guard against that incredulity being brought into an injurious precedent by others, in justification of the like incredulity on their parts, or as a ground of expecting the like sensible proofs for its removal. To those, to whom the resurrection of Jesus, that corner stone of the Gospel, was thenceforth and in future ages to be preached, the evidence, on which their faith was to be built, was the evidence not of sight, but of the

duly authenticated teaching of the Apostles. Men were to be called upon to believe, not what they had themselves seen, but what they should receive upon the testimony, first delivered by word of mouth, and then in written documents, of those who had. "Faith" was to "come by hearing^a." Such testimony, our Lord knew, would be sufficient, not to compel, but to induce belief; not to force conviction upon the reluctant gainsayer, but to persuade the reasonable inquirer, and to satisfy the intelligent, the candid, and the willing mind. More than such testimony, he knew, would not be necessary: nor, if required at all, would it be required under circumstances corresponding with those of our Apostle; nor if granted, would it tend, as in the case of our Apostle, "to the more confirmation of the faith;" nor would the granting of it be consistent with the divine economy in the establishment of a standing revelation of his will. Upon all expectations therefore of further evidence, than that which should be transmitted from the Apostles, our Saviour in this reply to Thomas imposes an implied prohibition. At the same time upon those, who should duly inquire into the evidence provided for them, and be persuaded, and believe, he pronounces a blessing: a blessing, which may

^a Rom. x. 17.

well make us content that we "have not seen" our risen Saviour with our own eyes, provided we have faith in his resurrection upon the credit of those who have; and add to our faith the ingenuous confession of the Apostle; and acknowledge him and call upon him as "our Lord and our God."

We conclude our reflexions upon the Saint of the day with the Collect provided by the Church. "Almighty and everliving God, who for the more confirmation of the faith didst suffer thy holy Apostle Thomas to be doubtful in thy Son's resurrection; Grant us so perfectly, and without all doubt, to believe in thy Son Jesus Christ, that our faith in thy sight may never be reproved. Hear us, O Lord, through the same Jesus Christ, to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, now and for evermore. *Amen.*"

And "grant to us, Lord, we beseech thee, the spirit to think and do always such things as be rightful; that we, who cannot do any thing that is good without thee, may by thee be enabled to live according to thy will; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*"

And "grant, we" moreover "beseech thee, Almighty God, that like as we do believe thy

^b Collect for the ninth Sunday after Trinity.

^c Collect for the Ascension Day.

only-begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ to have ascended into the heavens, so we may also in heart and mind thither ascend, and with him continually dwell, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. *Amen.*"

Rash was the word : " Except I see
The hands which bore him on the tree ;
Till on those hands my fingers trace
The thrilling nail's indented place ;
And till my hand be close applied,
And feel the spear-print in his side ;
Know, I believe not." Rashly said,
THOMAS, that word thy doubts betray'd.

" Reach forth, and let thy finger trace
Here the sharp nail's indented place ;
Reach forth, and be thine hand applied
To feel the spear-print in my side :
See and believe !" The Apostle knew
The voice, the form, the features true ;
Doubt fled : and answering faith avow'd,
" My Lord art thou, and thou my God !"

O Thou, whose ear at distance heard
Thy faltering servant's wayward word,
Whose voice reproved the fond demand,
Whose form endured the searching hand ;
O may the *doubt*, which vex'd his breast,
Make us with strong assurance blest ;
Whilst taught by his *belief* we see
Thy Father's glory shrin'd in Thee !

ST. STEPHEN.

Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost.

Acts vi. 5.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE OF ST. STEPHEN.

THE Saint of this day is St. Stephen, the leader of "the noble army of" Christian "martyrs:" and being the only martyr, who in that character alone is commemorated by the Church, he may be esteemed the representative of that illustrious body.

The commemoration of men, distinguished for their martyrdom to the faith, is of very early date in the annals of Christianity. The Churches of Antioch and Smyrna instituted festivals in honour of their respective bishops, Ignatius and Polycarp, both disciples of St. John, from the periods of their martyrdom. And the rest of the primitive churches appear to have adopted the same practice with regard to the more eminent of their own martyrs^a.

^a For some of the observations at the commencement of this Article, I am indebted to a Sermon of Archbishop Secker.

But by degrees the multiplicity of these festivals became very improper and inconvenient: persons, distinguished as sufferers in one Church, were adopted into the liturgies of others; other persons were admitted, who had been eminently good, but had not "resisted unto blood;" whilst others again in subsequent ages were allowed to partake of the high distinction, without due inquiry into their pretensions. Meanwhile the manner of celebrating them had been permitted to exceed the bounds of moderation, and even of piety. The feeling effusions of grateful respect and affection, wherein the Saint was at first called upon, as if present, under the rhetorical forms of apostrophe and exclamation, by degrees led to the belief that he was present in reality, and deviated into addresses of literal invocation and adoration. No longer regarded merely as a witness to the faith of Christ, he was admitted to share the Saviour's mediatorial character, if not to infringe the divine attribute of being the sole author and giver of all good things to men.

At the Reformation these evils were felt and corrected. Almost all the other Protestant Churches, deterred by the unjustifiable practices of the Church of Rome, abolished both the abuse and the use. But our Church, with her characteristic moderation and discretion, whilst she

removed the evil, retained the good. She perpetuated the commemoration of none but such saints only, and those the principal ones, who are mentioned in the New Testament: and of such the only saint commemorated solely upon the ground of his being a martyr, is St. Stephen, who, as he is distinguished by being the first of that "noble army," so is the only one of the primitive Christians, the manner of whose death is related at large in holy writ. Meanwhile from her commemorative services she excluded every thing exceptionable; and thus made them occasions, not of unduly magnifying the creature, but of glorifying the Creator for the virtues and sufferings of his servants.

The festival of St. Stephen was celebrated in early times: but why it was celebrated at this particular season of the year, is matter of conjecture rather than of certainty. It appears clear indeed, that neither this festival of St. Stephen, nor those of St. John and the Holy Innocents, which immediately succeed, coincide with the periods of the death and sufferings of the persons respectively commemorated. But they are supposed to follow the high festival of our Lord's nativity, because none were thought fitter attendants on the birth of Christ, than the blessed martyrs, who have laid down their lives for him, from whom they have received spiri-

tual and eternal life. Accordingly it has been observed by ritualists, that whereas "there are three kinds of martyrdom; the first in will and deed, which is the highest; the second in will, but not in deed; and the third in deed, but not in will; of which the first was undergone by St. Stephen, the second by St. John, and the third by the Holy Innocents; in this order they attend^b."

It has also been supposed, that "the first place was assigned to St. Stephen, because he was the proto-martyr; the second to St. John, because his death falling upon the festival of another John, namely the Baptist, and there being good reason why they should be honoured with separate days, no day could be assigned to the Evangelist more proper than that he should be near his Master, he being 'the disciple whom Jesus loved.' And the Innocents might well pretend to the third, because, as St. Cyprian saith, 'the slaughter of the Innocents was the first considerable consequent of his birth^c.'"

Such are the reasons generally given for the concurrence of these three holydays: whilst, specially with regard to the martyrdom of St. Stephen following the great solemnity of Christ-

^a Bishop Sparrow's Rationale.

^b L'Estrange's Alliance of Divine Offices.

mas, the Church has been said to have "joined these two festivals together, that we might observe the sacred life of our great Master, and the exemplary death of this heroick saint at one view. In Christ's nativity we have all that humility and condescension, which must qualify us for a good life: and in St. Stephen's martyrdom all that faith, hope, and charity, which must be a Christian's exercise at the great and important hour of his death^d."

Of the country or kindred of St. Stephen the sacred history gives us no account. That he was a Jew is unquestionable, as appears from his own acknowledgment in his Apology to the people: but whether originally of the stock of Abraham, or of parents incorporated by proselytism; whether born at Jerusalem, or among the dispersed in the Gentile provinces, is uncertain^e. Antiquity reports him with sufficient probability, to have been one of the seventy disciples chosen by our Lord as coadjutors to the Apostles in the ministry of the Gospel: and indeed his knowledge of the Christian doctrine, and his ability in proving Jesus to be the Messiah, are an argument for his having been trained under our Lord's immediate instructions. Doubtless he was, for so the Scripture describes

^d *Historia Sacra.*

^e *Dr. Cave's Life of St. Stephen.*

him, "a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost;" animated with a pious zeal for the Christian verity, and endowed with an extraordinary measure of that divine Spirit, who had been lately shed upon the Church, and by whom he was enabled to "do great wonders and miracles among the people."

The office, which St. Stephen bore in the Church, was that of one of the primitive deacons: an office, which had its origin from some discontent of certain members of the Church concerning the manner, in which the charitable contributions of the Christian community were dispersed among its different members. "There arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration." The "Grecians" here spoken of were members of the Christian Church, Grecians by birth, but proselytes to Judaism; or, as others think, they were Jews by descent, but "of the dispersion," as they are elsewhere described, and so using not the Hebrew or Syriack, but the Greek, language in their synagogues. The "Hebrews" were, as their name imports, Jews originally both by birth and by religion. The former of these were of opinion that an undue preference or partiality was shewn to the widows of the latter: and their complaints gave the first occa-

sion to that order in the Church, which has ever since continued under the title of deacons.

The end, which the Apostles had chiefly in view at the first institution of this order, was the appointment of proper persons to assist them in the affairs of the Church, particularly in the care of the poor: to which, when added to their other occupations, the smallness of the Apostles' number rendered them unequal; and over which the superior importance of their own peculiar functions required them to prefer those functions, namely, of "prayer and the ministry of the word."

But though this was the primary and a main part of the deacon's office, it seems not to have been the whole. The care of the Apostles that the newly appointed should be duly qualified for their office, "men of good report, full of the Holy Ghost and of wisdom," bespeaks their sense of the great religious importance of the office: the solemn rite of consecration, whereby the newly-appointed were ordained to it, confirms its religious character. Their appointment to "serve tables" appears also to imply their attendance, not only on tables where distribution was made of alms to the poor, but on the table of the Lord's Supper: for in those days the Christian agapæ, or love-feasts, at which rich and poor sate down together, accom-

panied the holy Eucharist, and both were administered every day, so that their ministration respected both the one and the other. And that such was the practice of the primitive Church, we learn from a statement of Justin Martyr, that when the president of the Assembly had consecrated the Eucharist, the distribution of the bread and wine was committed to the deacons. Nor was their authority confined to this particular service; nor need we look far for an example of others being performed by them: since in the early continuation of this history we find Philip, one of the deacons here ordained by the Apostles, preaching the Gospel, and admitting converts to the profession of it by baptism^f.

To this order of deacons, thus instituted by the Apostles, the Saint of this day was now admitted. Seven persons, duly qualified for the purpose, having been under the Apostles' direction "looked out" by the disciples at large, were by the Apostles "appointed" to their office with prayer for a blessing upon the undertaking, and a solemn "laying on of hands:" a symbolical rite, derived from antiquity, and transmitted to succeeding ages, for investiture and consecration to any extraordinary office.

^f Acts vi. 5. viii. 26—40.

The first of these seven deacons in the catalogue, the most celebrated in the subsequent history of the Church, and probably also the most distinguished at the time for his eminent qualifications, was St. Stephen : at least he is particularly named, as “ a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost.” And in the sequel he was proved to have been exquisitely skilled in all parts of Christian doctrine, and endowed with appropriate eloquence to declare and publish it ; enriched with many miraculous gifts and powers ; and encouraged by a spirit of courage and resolution to encounter the most vehement opposition.

Such opposition soon awaited him. At Jerusalem were many synagogues, established not only for expounding the law and for publick worship, but as schools or colleges for the education and instruction of youth in the Jewish law and traditions : and several of them, being erected at the expence and for the use of those Jews who lived in foreign countries, were denominated after the name of the countries, to which they respectively belonged. Certain members of five of these synagogues, persons of very different countries, and skilled in the subtleties of their religion, rose up to dispute with Stephen ; but they were “ not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he

spake^s." Thus ashamed of being openly defeated by their single adversary, and incensed that the religion which they opposed had thereby received such signal confirmation, they "suborned" men of profligate consciences to accuse him of blasphemy; and then brought him tumultuously to the council, in order to procure against him a formal decree of condemnation.

The accusation alleged against him was, that he had spoken "blasphemous words against Moses and against God:" and again, that he "ceased not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the law: for we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us."

The blasphemy, as they calumniously termed his language, no doubt exaggerating and misrepresenting what he had said in a very different spirit; "the blasphemy against Moses" was probably his assertion, that the authority of Moses was inferior to, or was to be superseded by, that of Christ: "the blasphemy against God" was probably involved in the blasphemy against Moses, forasmuch as God was the great Author of the religion which Moses had taught

* Acts vi. 10.

the Jews by his command^h; or it was the ascribing of divinity to one who had suffered publicly as a malefactorⁱ; the setting up of one that was dead, so St. Chrysostom interprets it, "as an anti-god to the great Creator of the world^k." "The blasphemy against the holy place and the law," probably consisted in a prediction, that the temple was to be destroyed, and the ritual law of course abolished.

These accusations were met by the holy man with a defence, before the delivery of which it pleased God to manifest his approbation of his servant, by investing his countenance with a supernatural and angelical brightness, such as had formerly beamed from that of Moses, when he had been talking with God^l: for that appears to be the proper signification of the Evangelist's narrative, that "all that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel^m."

In his defence, contained in the 7th chapter of the Acts, he took a survey of the Jewish history from the days of Abraham to those of Solomon: confuting the erroneous notions of the Jews concerning the excellence and the perma-

^h Dr. Doddridge's Family Expositor. ⁱ Bp. Horsley's Tracts. ^k Dr. Cave's Life of St. Stephen. ^l Exod. xxxiv. 29. ^m Acts vi. 15.

nency of the Mosaick dispensation ; and proving to them from the records of their own Scriptures, that Abraham and the Patriarchs had been chosen of God and had served him acceptably, long before the law was given by Moses, and the tabernacle and temple were built : that Moses himself, commissioned as he was by God to be “ a ruler and deliverer ” of the people by whom he had been previously “ refused,” and to be the giver of the law to the people, had nevertheless foretold the giving of a new law, inasmuch as he had announced, “ A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me : him shall ye hear : ” that the law of Moses therefore was avowedly of a temporary nature : that it had been proved on many occasions insufficient for keeping the people in their obedience : that the temple, like the tabernacle before it, which had been made by divine command and after a divine pattern, was but of a transient and temporary duration, and was of no essential value in the sight of God. In the end he burst into a strain of severe reprehension : condemning the wilfulness of their fathers in resisting the Holy Ghost, and their own hereditary stubbornness ; charging their fathers with having slain the prophets who had foretold the coming of the Messiah, and themselves with having be-

trayed and murdered the Messiah himself, thus rebelling against the law of which they professed themselves such zealous maintainers, which had been solemnly delivered to them by the ministry of angels, and which the Messiah had come to perfect and fulfil.

The patience of his hearers could endure no longer. They suffered him not to proceed with the application of his arguments. They broke in upon his defence with signs of malice, rage, and fury. "They were cut to the heart, and they gnashed upon him with their teeth." But he, regardless of their fury, and being "full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw" the splendour of the divine presence, and Jesus himself, the crucified Jesus, arrayed in paternal glory, and in a posture of readiness to succour and receive him. He saw, and therefore did he speak. And he said, "Behold I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." The furious assembly heard these words: and they heard in them a confirmation and an aggravation of the "blasphemy," which he had been before accused of "speaking against God." They heard in them an assertion, not only of the divine mission, but of the divine nature and majesty, of Jesus. "Then they cried with a loud voice, and stopped their ears,

and ran upon him with one accord, and cast him out of the city, and stoned him ;” thus inflicting upon him the death, which the law appointed for blasphemers, but not awaiting in their tumultuous impatience for blood all the tedious formalities of the law. He died as he had lived ; bearing testimony to the truth and efficacy of the Gospel, and withal to the deity of his crucified Master. His last breath was uttered in a prayer to Jesus, first for himself, and then for his murderers. “ They stoned Stephen, calling upon *God* and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” The word *God* is not in the original text, which might be better rendered thus, “ They stoned Stephen, invoking and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” After praying for himself, he kneeled down to pray for his persecutors : and such was the composure with which he died, although the manner of his death was the most tumultuous and terrifying, that, as if he had expired quietly upon his bed, the sacred historian says with beautiful simplicity, that “ he fell asleep.”

Thus died St. Stephen, the Proto-martyr of the Christian faith ; obtaining, saith Eusebius, a reward, truly answering to his name, “ a crown.” He was a man, in whom the virtues of the

* See Bp. Horsley's Tracts.

divine life were eminently conspicuous: "a man, full of faith and of the Holy Ghost:" indefatigable in his zeal for the glory of God in Jesus Christ; of courage, active and enduring; of constancy, firm and unshaken; in piety, most submissive; in charity, most forgiving. The miraculous conversion of St. Paul, who was "standing by, and consenting to the martyr's death, and kept the clothes of them that slew him," has been considered a proof of the efficacy of St. Stephen's dying prayers, and of that gracious favour with which God was pleased to hear him^o.

The time of his martyrdom is placed by some learned men about eight months after our Lord's death: by others, at the distance of about three years; by others again, of seven. Eusebius expressly affirms, that it was not long after his appointment to the office of a deacon: and by Chrysostom, and some others who have spoken in his honour, we are led to conclude that he was martyred young. The Scripture informs us further, that "his body was carried to its burial by devout men," and that "great lamentation was made over him^p," such as was due to one, of whose future labours the Church was deprived, though she gained by his

^o Dr. Cave.

^p Acts viii. 2.

example. The place, where he suffered, is said by the Evangelist to have been "out of the city." Over the place the Empress Eudocia, wife of Theodosius, erected a beautiful and stately church to the honour of this first martyr: and tradition still preserves the memory of the spot, without the walls on the north side of Jerusalem, in a broad stone, on which he is said to have suffered martyrdom, and in a gate, called St. Stephen's gate, from its vicinity to the supposed place of his suffering⁹.

REFLEXIONS.

IN reflecting upon the actions related of St. Stephen, we may first have regard to the character given of him by the Evangelist, that he was "a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost." In this character we perceive the principle by which he was actuated, and the power which enabled him to act under its impulse: Faith, the principle; the Holy Ghost, the power. As it is from the Holy Spirit of God that men derive their sufficiency to do things pleasing to God, so it is through the principle of faith that they act in such a manner as to please him. And sound must have been that principle, and great must have been

⁹ Maundrell's Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem.

that power, which enabled Stephen to support the trial to which he was exposed, with the fortitude, and firmness, and pious confidence, and forgiving meekness, which marked the last moments of this holy man.

The manner indeed, in which the early Christian martyrs, after the example of this their leader, the illustrious soldier and servant of Christ commemorated on this day, submitted to their sufferings in testimony to the Christian truth, is most surprising; and affords a strong argument for our faith and confidence in the goodness of God. They were imprisoned and proscribed: they were banished: they were condemned to work in the mines: they were made to fight with wild beasts in the theatres for the diversion of the people: they were put to the torture: they were placed in red hot iron chairs: they were crucified, impaled, burned alive: in a word, they were compelled to undergo all the torments, which cruelty and barbarity, inflamed by rage, could invent: torments, of which we cannot hear or read without horror, and at the very mention of which human nature shudders and recoils. Yet these inflictions they endured with the most undaunted courage, and with constancy the most unbending. As feminine weakness, the tender-

ness of youth, or the decrepitude of declining years, was no protection from the cruel acts of the persecutor, so were they no impediments in the sufferer to the most persevering resolution and the most patient endurance. They were led to their deaths, deaths the most violent and tremendous, like St. Stephen: and, like St. Stephen, they met their deaths with a firmness, which triumphed over all that men could do unto them, because, like him, they were "full of faith and of the Holy Ghost." God, we cannot but suppose, suffered them not to sink under the trials, which he permitted them to undergo for his Son's sake; but made them "strong in faith," and gave them a more abundant measure of his Spirit to support them. And in them he has furnished us with an encouragement, to persevere in the faith, to which they bore testimony; and ensamples, that, if we strive to do so, we shall have a sufficient supply of his grace.

The special motive, which animated the first martyr, was doubtless the assured prospect of heavenly happiness, in exchange for his earthly sufferings borne in testimony to the truth of Christ. To him indeed, at the moment of his sufferings, a special revelation was vouchsafed, setting before him in sensible view the majesty of his Lord. "He, being full of the Holy

Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God." And there appears an evident propriety, in the admission of this first martyr to a particular enjoyment of the beatifick vision during the agonies of his mortal combat. The Apostles had beheld the blessed Jesus "taken up into heaven, till a cloud received him out of their sight." The cloud that obscured him was now removed; and the first martyr beheld the Saviour, amid the radiance of the divine glory, in a posture of defence and protection of his suffering servant. "He was set in the forefront of the battle, the first of that noble army who resisted unto blood in defence of Jesus and his truth. And the issue of that encounter was of mighty consequence: of mighty consequence, not only to the champion himself, but to the cause in which he was engaged, and to the many millions of souls who were to engage in it after him. The religion, which undertook so boldly to renounce the world, and "brought life and immortality to light," was then in its infancy. And an instance of those regions of immortality opening themselves to one, who had so stedfastly fixed his eyes upon them, and in the strength of that vision triumphed over death and malice in their ghastliest form, proved the force, as well as the

certainly, of those hopes and that faith inspired by the Gospel'." But the vision, once vouchsafed, was not to be repeated to the material eye. By the eye of faith only was the Saviour afterwards beheld by succeeding martyrs: and by the eye of faith he is, as the Church teaches us to pray, to be beheld by us. We have no reason to expect, we have every reason not to expect, a repetition of St. Stephen's vision: but, if "we look up stedfastly to heaven in our sufferings here upon earth for the testimony of the truth," or in those sufferings which are generally incident to our mortal nature, we have good reason to expect, that we shall "by faith behold the glory that shall be revealed;" and be supported by that faith, until we be translated into the presence of Him, even "Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God'."

To Him meanwhile our duty is to be performed in this life: and amongst other marks of faithful devotion there is one in particular suggested by the conduct of the Saint of this day. "They stoned Stephen, calling upon, or invocat-

* Dean Stanhope.

* Heb. xii. 2.

ing, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit :” an evident and express act of worship, unquestionably addressed to our blessed Saviour, but properly addressed to none but “ the God of the spirits of all flesh,” to whom, when “ the dust returns to the earth as it was, the spirit likewise returns,” even “ unto God who gave it.” And again we read, “ he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge :” another act of worship, properly addressed to that Being alone who forgiveth sin, but as plainly addressed to the same Lord Jesus, to whom the dying martyr had before resigned his spirit.

The case is well stated by two learned prelates of the Church. “ Our blessed Saviour,” observes Bp. Tomline, “ when expiring upon the cross, cried out, ‘ Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit :’ and he had just before prayed for his murderers in these words, ‘ Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.’ In like manner the first martyr, St. Stephen, at the moment of his being stoned to death, prayed to Christ, ‘ Lord Jesus, receive my spirit ;’ and for his murderers he added, ‘ Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.’ These prayers of Christ addressed to his Father, and of St. Stephen addressed to Christ, are in substance the same, and are recorded by the same Evangelist, St.

Luke. 'It seems very evident,' says Bishop Burnet, 'that if Christ was not the true God, and equal to the Father, then this Proto-martyr died in two acts that seem, not only idolatrous, but also blasphemous, since he worshipped Christ in the same acts, in which Christ had worshipped his Father.' But to remove all doubt concerning the lawfulness of St. Stephen's worship of Christ, and to give decisive authority to his example, St. Luke tells us, that Stephen was "full of the Holy Ghost." What higher authority can we need, or can we receive, for encouraging us to call upon Him, as present to hear, mighty to save, merciful to forgive! And with what propriety does the Church direct the devotions of her people this day by the example of the martyr, "who prayed for his murderers to thee, O blessed Jesus, who standest at the right hand of God, to succour all those that suffer for thee, our only Mediator and Advocate?"

But let us not fail to remember a duty to our brethren also, inculcated in this dying prayer of the first martyr; of which the Church has not failed to remind us by her prayer, that, "being filled with the Holy Ghost, we may learn to love and bless our persecutors by his example." To forgive our enemies, and in pursuance and in token of our forgiveness to pray for and to bless them, is an indispensable

Christian duty, and one of the surest testimonies of a heart filled with the Holy Spirit of love. And if this blessed martyr, suffering as he was under the agonies of a violent death, and beset by the most ferocious and unforgiving malice, could nevertheless call upon his Redeemer, after the example of that Redeemer in the days of his flesh, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge;" what are our enemies, or what are their offences, that we can be warranted in withholding from them our pardon and our prayers?

Lastly, be it our endeavour, so to tread in the paths of faith and hope and piety and brotherly love, that we may finish our course with the calmness and composure of this holy sufferer. Amidst the malice of the infuriated multitude, the gnashing of their teeth, the noise of their execrations, and the shower of overwhelming stones, he resigned his spirit to his Redeemer; he kneeled down, and poured forth a prayer for his murderers; "And when he had said this, he fell asleep." So soft a pillow is death to a good man; so willingly, so quietly, does he leave the world, as a weary labourer goes to bed at night. What storms or tempests soever may follow him while he lives, his sun, in spite of all the malice and cruelty of his enemies, sets serene and calm: 'Mark the

perfect, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace¹.” The persecution, which assailed St. Stephen at his death, is not likely to be the lot of many of us: few of us are likely to be exposed to the tempest of that unfeeling malice, which overwhelmed him in premature and violent destruction. But man is born to pain and trouble; and trouble and pain must be the lot of all of us, more especially at that awful season, when we are called upon to commend our spirit into the hands of Him who gave it. God grant us grace to live the life, that we may die the death, of the righteous; and that our latter end may be like his, for the merits of Him, who died and was buried and rose again for us, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour!

Collect for the day.

“GRANT, O Lord, that in all our sufferings here upon earth for the testimony of thy truth, we may stedfastly look up to heaven, and by faith behold the glory that shall be revealed; and being filled with the Holy Ghost, may learn to love and bless our persecutors by the example of thy first martyr St. Stephen, who prayed for his murderers to thee, O blessed Jesus, who

¹ Dr. Cave.

standest at the right hand of God to succour all them that suffer for thee, our only Mediator and Advocate. *Amen.*"

"O God, forasmuch as without thee we are not able to please thee; mercifully grant that thy Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*"

"Almighty and everlasting God, give unto us the increase of faith, hope, and charity; and that we may obtain that which thou dost promise, make us to love that which thou dost command, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. *Amen.*"

"I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, From henceforth blessed are the dead which die in the Lord: even so saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labours.

"O merciful God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the resurrection and the life; in whom whosoever believeth shall live, though he die; and whosoever liveth and believeth in him, shall not die eternally; We meekly beseech thee, O Father, to raise us from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness; that, when

* Collect for the 19th Sunday after Trinity.

* Collect for the 14th Sunday after Trinity.

† From the Order for the Burial of the Dead.

we shall depart this life, we may rest in him ;
 and that, at the general Resurrection in the last
 day, we may be found acceptable in thy sight ;
 and receive that blessing, which thy well-be-
 loved Son shall then pronounce to all that love
 and fear thee, saying, Come, ye blessed chil-
 dren of my Father, receive the kingdom pre-
 pared for you from the beginning of the world :
 Grant this, we beseech thee, O merciful Father,
 through Jesus Christ, our Mediator and Re-
 deemer. *Amen.*"

Praise to the noble brotherhood of those,
 Christ's soldiers, who "resisted unto blood !"
 And praise to him, who foremost dared oppose
 Till death the malice, which his Lord withstood !

Praise to the martyr'd army, and to thee,
 STEPHEN ! but praise alone to *you* be given !
 Blessing and worship to the Majesty,
 The dread, the jealous Majesty of heaven !

Lo ! while around thee prest the murderous band,
 The courts of glory to thy sight were shown.
 And thou didst see the incarnate Saviour stand
 Fast by the brightness of the Almighty throne.

" Lord, Jesus, take my spirit to thy rest !
 Lord, from their charge this sin in mercy keep !"
 Thus, humbly kneeling, was thy prayer address :
 And thus adoring didst thou sink to sleep.

Led by that Spirit, Saint ! who prompted thee,
 Servants of God we to His house repair ;
And in the union of the Deity
 Pour to the incarnate Word a Christian's prayer :

Father, forgive ! forgive, eternal Son !
 And, Spirit blest, thy suppliants' sins forgive !
Forgive our foes, Thrice Holy Glorious One,
 And grant us ever in thy grace to live !

ST. JOHN.

John the brother of James. MARK iii. 17.

That disciple whom Jesus loved. JOHN xxi. 7.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE OF ST. JOHN THE APOSTLE AND EVANGELIST.

THE Saint of this day was one of the sons of Zebedee, "John the brother of James." Distinguished from his brother and all of the other Apostles, except St. Matthew, by being an evangelist; distinguished from the other evangelists, except St. Matthew again, by being an apostle; distinguished from St. Matthew by being not an evangelist only and an apostle, but a prophet: but, notwithstanding these high and honourable marks of distinction, by nothing more favourably known in the Christian Church than by his character of "that disciple whom Jesus loved."

The father of St. John was Zebedee, a fisherman upon the sea of Galilee; probably of the town of Bethsaida, the residence of Andrew

and Peter and Philip. His mother was Salome, mentioned by St. Mark as one of the devout women, who ministered to our blessed Saviour in Galilee, waited upon him in his journey thence to Jerusalem, stood by the cross at his crucifixion, prepared spices to anoint his dead body, and, on coming with that intent to the sepulchre, saw there a vision of angels, who gave them the first joyful news that he was risen.

The first express mention of St. John in the Gospel history is on occasion of his being called with his brother James to leave the business, in which he was at that time occupied, and to follow Jesus. It is probable however, that in his own Gospel he speaks of himself as one of the two disciples of John the Baptist, (the other was St. Andrew,) to whom the Baptist pointed out our Saviour as the Lamb of God, and who thereupon sought Jesus in his own abode: it being his manner to indicate himself by allusion in other passages of his Gospel. If so, the instructions which he had received from the Baptist, and his own interview and conversation with Jesus, would have prepared him for the ready obedience, with which he, as well as Andrew, received the injunction of their Lord, and together with his brother "left the ship and their father, and followed

him." It is probable also, that he was one of the disciples, who were present at the wedding in Cana of Galilee, where the water was turned into wine. If so, this was one particular opportunity, of which doubtless from his situation others also had occurred, of his having seen and heard the Lord Jesus previously to his call, and of his having been witness of some of his miracles. Nor can there be a reasonable question, but that he and his brother and the other two great Apostles, called together with them, although designated in the fourth chapter of the Acts as "unlearned and ignorant men," that is, men not versed in the depths and subtleties of Rabbinical learning, were, like the children of pious Jews in general at that time, well acquainted with the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and expected the appearance of the Messiah, foretold by the law and the prophets, though undoubtedly with those prepossessions as to the worldly character of his kingdom, which the Jews in general entertained^a.

St. John, having been called to attend upon our Saviour, was soon after appointed an Apostle, being, as is universally supposed, the youngest of those who were admitted to that honour. Upon this occasion he, together with

^a Dr. Lardner.

his brother, received the name of Boanerges, or sons of thunder^b; a name, probably denoting the force with which they should preach, and the effect which should be produced on the minds of others by their preaching, that divine word, which is frequently compared to thunder, being like that of the voice of God, speaking from heaven, mighty in its operation^c. Agreeably to this interpretation we find St. John recorded in the Acts as one of the chief speakers and actors in the propagation and defence of the Gospel, whilst the zeal of St. James appears to have been the cause why he was slain at an early period by the sword of Herod. Probably also the appellation denoted further their energy in propounding the great doctrines and mysteries of the Gospel in a profounder strain than the rest of the Apostles; which was certainly verified in the Saint of this day, whose Gospel is so full of the more sublime notions and mysteries of religion concerning the deity, eternal preexistence, and incarnation of Christ, that he is generally affirmed by the ancients not so much to speak as to thunder^d.

St. John, together with St. James and St. Peter, was admitted by our Lord to witness the more intimate transactions of his ministry and

^b Mark iii. 17.
Life of St. James.

^c Bp. Horne.

^d Dr. Cave's

life, from which the other Apostles were excluded. These were the three, who attended their Master, when he raised the daughter of Jairus from the dead^f. These were the three, to whom, together with Andrew, he foretold the destruction of Jerusalem^g. These were the three, whom he chose to be eye-witnesses of his majesty, when he was transfigured on the mount, and to be hearers of the voice from heaven, which declared him to be the beloved Son of God^h. And these again were the three, whom he chose to be spectators of those bitter agonies, which he sustained in the garden of Gethsemane, when his soul was exceeding sorrowful even unto death, and he prayed that, if it were possible, the cup might pass from him. "Thus whatever was most remarkable in their blessed Master's actions or teaching, which he saw convenient to conceal for a season; the most convincing evidences of his godhead and his manhood, the brightest lustre of the one, and the lowest humiliation of the other; all indeed that could bespeak a particular confidence and kindness, was reserved for a retreat with those select friends, of whom, though so few, St. John had constantly the privilege to be oneⁱ."

^f Mark v. 37.

^g Mark xiii. 3.

^h Matt. xvii. 1.

ⁱ Dean Stanhope.

Upon St. John himself some marks of favour appear to have been bestowed, of which the others were not partakers. To him belonged the privilege of occupying the place nearest to Jesus at the time of meals, or, as it is expressed with reference to the posture of lying or reclining on couches usual in the latter days of the Jews, of "leaning on Jesus' breast at supperⁱ." He, in the silence of Peter and of the other Apostles, questioned our Lord concerning the one who should be the traitor; and to him our Lord vouchsafed to communicate the intelligence which he sought^k. To him our Lord, when expiring on the cross, consigned the care of his widowed and sorrowful mother^l. To him belongs the oft-times repeated title of "the disciple whom Jesus loved^m."

There are indeed three occasions mentioned in the Gospels, whereon St. John was so unhappy as to experience our Lord's reproof. Once, when, aspiring to a state of pre-eminence above his fellows, he together with his brother petitioned to be allowed "to sit, one on the right hand of Christ, the other on his left, in his kingdomⁿ." Again, when he forbade one to

ⁱ John xiii. 23, 25.

^k John xiii. 26.

^l John xix.

26, 27.

^m John xiii. 23. xix. 26. xx. 2. xxi 20.

ⁿ Matt. xx. 21.

proceed in casting out devils, though he did it in Christ's name, because he followed not in the train of Christ. A third time, when he joined with James in demanding whether it was his Lord's will to call down fire from heaven, and consume the inhabitants of a Samaritan village, because they refused to receive Jesus on his passage to Jerusalem°. These were instances respectively of an overweening ambition; of jealousy, leading to a want of just discrimination; of indignation, not properly tempered by forbearance and mercy. Yet perhaps in extenuation of these it may be said, that they betrayed an earnest attachment and devotion to his Lord: that it was an ambition to be placed as near as possible to his person; that it was a jealousy arising out of anxiety for his honour; that it was an indignation suggested by high respect for his authority. In the two last cases particularly the warmth manifested by the Apostle seems to have proceeded from an honest and well-intentioned, though an ill-informed and ill-regulated zeal. It subsided, in consequence of our Lord's reproofs, into a spirit of meekness and charity, which afterwards shewed itself most conspicuously in St. John, by declarations of the most fervid

° Luke ix. 51.

love for his brethren, and of willingness even to purchase their lives and safety by the sacrifice of his own, in proof of the sincerity of his love and gratitude to Christ^p. Nor let it be forgotten that the offences, being repented of and forsaken, deprived not our Apostle of the place he had obtained in his Lord's favour; since we find him at the last supper placed next to Jesus, and admitted to his special confidence and regard^q.

Meanwhile his sense of the love of his Lord towards him, and his own reciprocal affection for his Lord, were manifested in the season most proper for giving proof of them, namely that of his Lord's suffering and disgrace. If, when attending in the garden of Gethsemane, together with Peter and James, the weakness of human nature overcame his good resolutions and endeavours to watch for his sorrowful Master: if, at the nearer approach of danger, dismay seized on him in common with the rest of the eleven, and he, as well as the other disciples, "forsook him and fled:" it is probable that he was that other disciple, who with Peter in some degree recovered from his panick, and "followed Jesus, and went in with Jesus into the hall of the high priest;" it is certain, that he attended,

^p 1 John iii. 16. ^q John xiii. 22—26. ^r John xviii. 15.

(and, so far as the Gospel history informs us, he was the only Apostle who did attend,) at the crucifixion; that, in company with the afflicted mother of the dying Redeemer, he stood by the cross of Jesus; that he received from Jesus the charge of his now destitute parent, with an injunction to treat her, as if she were his own; and that he accepted the charge with the most prompt obedience, and, as if he had been indeed her son, "from that hour took her unto his own home^s." When, at the instant of his death, the expiring Saviour said with his parting breath, "It is finished," the beloved disciple heard: and when "one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water," the same disciple "saw it and bare record, and his record is true." Nor can it be doubted that he continued on the spot after the death of Jesus, and saw the body taken from the cross, and laid in the sepulchre with such circumstances, as he has described in his narrative of the transaction.

After our Lord's resurrection, on the morning of the day on which he rose from the dead, St. John was the first Apostle who came to the empty tomb, where with St. Peter he examined

^s John xix. 26, 30, 34.

the circumstances of the grave-cloths, and ascertained the fact of the resurrection^u. On the evening of the same day he was present with the other disciples, when Jesus shewed himself to them all, with the exception of Thomas; and again, eight days after, when he appeared to them and to Thomas with them; the particulars of which appearances St. John has related^x. He has also related another remarkable appearance of our Lord, at which he was present with several other disciples at the sea of Tiberias, when his discernment first pointed out to Peter that "it was the Lord;" and when our Lord, having foretold the martyrdom of Peter, followed it by an intimation concerning John, generally understood to have been fulfilled in his survival of the destruction of Jerusalem, and not improbably also in his dying a natural death^y. With the other Apostles St. John was present at our Lord's ascension: with them he returned from Mount Olivet to Jerusalem, and continued with them in prayer and supplication, and joined with them in supplying the place of Judas^z, and partook with them in the plentiful effusion of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, and with them "wrought signs and wonders among the people," and with them

^u John xx. 2—8.

^x John xx. 19—29.

^y John xxi.

^z Acts i. 13, &c.

suffered stripes and imprisonment, "rejoicing that he was counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Jesus, and daily in the temple and in every house ceasing not to teach and preach Jesus Christ^a."

Upon some occasions St. John is particularly mentioned, and then for the most part with St. Peter, between whom and our Apostle a closer intimacy and friendship appear to have subsisted. It was at Peter's request that John undertook to ask of our Lord who it was that should betray him. It was to Peter, that John, having on our Lord's appearance at the sea of Tiberias discerned him to be Jesus, communicated the intelligence. And it was in concern for John, that Peter having been apprised "by what death he should glorify God," inquired "what that man should do." These were the two disciples, whom our Lord sent before him to prepare the passover^b: these were the two, whom Mary Magdalene sought, that she might impart to them the news of the sepulchre being empty^c: these were the two, who, after the descent of the Holy Spirit, "went up together into the temple," and there healed the impotent man^d: these were the two, who were first imprisoned for the name of Jesus, who justified to

^a Acts v. 12, 41, 42. ^b Luke xxii. 8. ^c John xx. 2.

^d Acts iii. 1.

the rulers their preaching salvation in that name, and boldly declared their resolution to persist in doing so^e: these two were chosen by the other Apostles and commissioned to confirm the new converts in Samaria, who had been instructed in the faith of Christ by the preaching of Philip the deacon^f: and lastly these two, and James the Lord's brother, are said to have been esteemed "pillars;" from them St. Paul declares that he received "the right hand of fellowship" at Jerusalem; and that with them it was agreed what part he should take in the propagation of the Gospel^g. These circumstances give proof of the more than ordinary union which prevailed between St. John and St. Peter; of the earnestness with which they led forward their brethren in the apostleship to danger and disgrace in the service of their Master; of the confidence reposed in them by their brethren, and of the authority with which they discharged their apostolical commission^h.

Thus far our information concerning St. John is derived from the records of holy writ. From ecclesiastical history it is probable that he continued to dwell at Jerusalem till after the death of the blessed Virgin, which was about 15 years subsequent to our Lord's ascension. After that

^e Acts iv.

^f Acts viii. 14.

^g Gal. ii. 9.

^h Dean Stanhope.

event, but how soon after is uncertain, it is allowed that he dwelt in Asia ; probably however not at a very early period¹, for in the whole of St. Luke's history of the preaching and travels of St. Paul, particularly in Asia, no mention is made of St. John, of whom mention would probably have been made, had he been there at that time: nor are there any salutations sent to St. John in any of St. Paul's Epistles written at Rome ; several of which were sent to Ephesus, or other places not very remote from it: as the Epistle to the Ephesians, to the Colossians, and to Philemon at Colossæ.

In Asia St. John industriously applied himself to the propagation of Christianity, preaching the Gospel in places where it had not previously taken root, and confirming it in those where it had been already planted. Of the former class probably were Smyrna, Pergamus, Thyateira, Sardis, and Philadelphia ; five of the seven churches to whom he addressed himself in the Revelation: of the latter class Laodicea might probably be one, and another certainly was Ephesus where St. Paul had formerly established a church, and placed it under the episcopal care of Timothy ; and where our Apostle appears eventually to have fixed his principal residence :

¹ Dr. Lardner.

nor could he have seated himself any where more commodiously for dispensing at the same time the knowledge of Christianity among the natives of different nations, by reason of its being the centre of communication between the great divisions of the then known world, of the extent of its commerce, and the convenience of its port to travellers from Syria and Egypt, from Greece and Macedonia, and the provinces between the Mediterranean and Euxine seas. That he also travelled and preached in Parthia, has been said ; but it may be doubted whether on sufficient authority.

After a lapse of several years, a persecution against the Christians, begun by order of the Emperor Domitian, fell upon St. John ; who at his command was sent by the Proconsul of Asia to Rome, where he is reported to have been cast into a caldron of boiling oil near the Latin gate, and to have been delivered from it without any injury. The occurrence is related by Tertullian in a manner, which has been supposed to import the fact to be abundantly notorious^k. But as it rests almost intirely upon the sole credit of Tertullian, and is omitted by several ancient writers, Irenæus, Origen, and others, who would probably have mentioned it,

^k Dean Stanhope.

if it had rested on good ground, who speak of the sufferings of the Apostles and of St. John's banishment to Patmos, and who yet say nothing of this extraordinary miracle; whilst the story is received by some, by others it is reckoned to be doubtful, and by others again is rejected as a fiction¹.

A better authenticated fact is his banishment to Patmos, a desolate island in the *Ægean* sea, not far from the coast of Asia. Thither he was banished, as he himself tells us, "for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ^m:" there he saw the visions which were revealed to him concerning the future fortunes of the Christian Church; and there he recorded them in the book, which derives its name of the *Apocalypse* or *Revelation* from the matter of it, towards the end of the reign of Domitian, near the close of the first century of the Christian era. The seeing of the *Apocalypse* in this island is affirmed by the work itself: and the composition of the book in the same island is according to the testimony of the ancients. And the inhabitants still retain traditionary notices of the fact in places regarded with honour both by the Greeks and the Latinsⁿ: particularly in "a small convent called *Apocalypse*, in which there

¹ Dr. Lardner.

^m Rev. i. 9.

ⁿ Dr. Wells's

Geography of the New Testament.

is a grot now converted into a church, where they say St. John lived when he was banished to this island, and where they affirm he writ the Revelation*." *vol. 1. p. 101.*

The death of Domitian, and the indulgence of Nerva towards the Christians whom he restored to their homes, caused the return of St. John, after about a year's absence, to Ephesus, where he continued for the remainder of his life. It was during his second residence here that he wrote his Gospel, at the request of the bishops of Asia: relating in it several passages in our Saviour's life, particularly at the beginning of his ministry, which had been omitted by the other Evangelists, such as the wedding at Cana, the visit of Nicodemus to our Saviour, his dialogue with the woman of Samaria, the healing of the nobleman's son at Capernaum, the giving of sight to the man born blind, and the raising of Lazarus; reciting our Lord's discourses at length upon several important topics, especially the promise of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter; giving most plain and frequent assurances, that Jesus is not only a prophet and a messenger of God, but the Christ, the Son of God; and asserting expressly and clearly at the beginning the deity of Christ, and pre-

* Bp. Pococke's Travels in the East.

missing that as the foundation of his work^p. Indeed it is generally supposed, on the authority of ancient writers, that he had the double object in view, first, of supplying those passages in the evangelical history which the previous Evangelists had omitted; and, secondly, of obviating the early heresies, especially those of Ebion, Cerinthus, and their followers, who began openly to deny the divine nature of Christ, and his existence before his incarnation^q. The subject, of which he treats, is sublime and mysterious; and he treats of it with great simplicity and dignity: so that he is generally and by an appropriate figure resembled by the ancients to an eagle soaring aloft, and especially honoured by the title of "divine," as due to him in an eminent and extraordinary manner^r.

About the same time he is supposed to have written his Epistles. The first of these, which has been at all times admitted as our Apostle's composition, though he does not prefix his name at the beginning, nor any where else mention it in the body of the work, contains also no description or character of the persons, to whom he writes, by the name of their city, or country, or any other local peculiarities.

^p Dr. Lardner.

^q Dr. Townson on the Gospels.

^r Mr. Nelson's Companion to the Festivals.

Several times he addresses them as "little children;" a tender and affectionate appellation, denoting paternal authority, love, and concern; fit to have been used by St. John, as an apostle, in any part of his life, but seeming to imply, together with apostolical authority, advanced age. It is called a general or catholick Epistle: and so it appears to have been designed for all Christians in general, into whose hands it should come, without any exception: or, if designed for any Christians more particularly, probably for the churches of Asia, at or near Ephesus, most connected with the Apostle by local situation, as well as by being under his more immediate superintendence. It has however little of the epistolary character: and "is indeed a didactick discourse upon the principles of Christianity, both in doctrine and practice. And whether we consider the sublimity of its opening, with the fundamental topicks of God's perfections, man's depravity, and Christ's propitiation; the perspicuity with which it propounds the deepest mysteries of our holy faith, and the evidence of the proof which it brings to confirm them; whether we consider the sanctity of its precepts, and the energy of the arguments with which they are persuaded and enforced; the dignified simplicity of language in which both doctrine and precept are deli-

vered: whether we regard the importance of the matter, the propriety of the style, or the general spirit of ardent piety and warm benevolence, united with a fervid zeal, which breathes throughout the whole composition; we shall find it in every respect worthy of the holy author, to whom the constant tradition of the Church ascribes it, "the disciple whom Jesus loved!"

The two other Epistles are written under the title of "the Elder," a very honourable character, well becoming St. John as an Apostle, and now far advanced in years, residing in Asia as superintendent of all the neighbouring churches. The Epistles are short, and addressed to two particular persons: the one a lady of honourable quality, styled "elect," on account of her profession of the Gospel, to which in common with other Christians she was chosen; the other, the charitable and hospitable Gaius, of whom little is known, except what may be collected from the Epistle itself, namely, that he was a kind friend and courteous entertainer of all indigent Christians, as well as a steadfast adherent to the Christian truth. There is not any reasonable ground for questioning the author, who is now generally admitted to

be St. John : and indeed the strong resemblance, which these two Epistles bear to the first in sentiment, phrase, and manner of writing, and even to a considerable extent their identity in sense or expression, sufficiently prove them to have proceeded from the same pen.

Several anecdotes are related of St. John by the fathers of the Church, two of which may be mentioned, as illustrative, the former of his deep sense of the importance of a sound Christian faith, the other of that of Christian charity. Irenæus records it as a narrative derived from his instructor Polycarp, St. John's own scholar and disciple, that St. John, going to bathe at Ephesus, and understanding that Cerinthus was within, retired in haste without bathing, saying to his companions, "Let us flee hence, lest the bath should fall, while Cerinthus the enemy of the truth is within." "Such abhorrence had even the best men at that time, such dreadful apprehensions, of those, who presumed to deny our Saviour's divinity ; so far were they from allowing them any manner of countenance, as not to think it either becoming or safe to mingle, so much as in civil or casual conversation, with such impious and professed enemies to the truth." And St. Jerome relates, that "the

blessed Apostle John, living at Ephesus to extreme old age, and being with difficulty carried to church in the arms of the disciples, and being unable to make a long discourse, every time they assembled was wont to say nothing but this, "Little children, love one another." At length the disciples and brethren who attended, tired of hearing so often the same thing, said, 'Sir, why do you always say this?' Who then made this answer, worthy of himself, 'Because it is the Lord's command; and if that alone be done, it is sufficient'."

Thus did our Apostle persevere to the last in promoting the Gospel of his Lord and Master, till it pleased that Lord and Master to take him to himself by a quiet and peaceable death, full of age and honours. He died at Ephesus, early in the reign of the Emperor Trajan, 68 years after our Lord's passion, being probably about 100 years of age; and he was buried near the same city. Of his character, as a man, no more satisfactory testimony can be given, than that which is contained in the brief and emphatical expression, "that disciple whom Jesus loved." His character, as a writer, is forcibly drawn in a few sentences by St. Jerome, who says, that "he was at once Apostle, Evangelist, and Prophet: Apostle, in

^a Dr. Lardner.

that he wrote letters to the Churches, as a master ; Evangelist, as he wrote a book of the Gospel, which no other of the twelve Apostles did, except St. Matthew ; Prophet, as he saw the revelation in the island Patmos, where he was banished by Domitian. His Gospel too differs from the rest. Like an eagle he ascends to the very throne of God, and says, "In the beginning was the Word^x."

REFLEXIONS.

THE circumstances, to which allusion has now been made in the life of St. John, may give occasion for the following reflexions.

Youth is no obstacle to the favour of God, nor to devotion to God's service. St. John was the youngest of the disciples ; but no one was more favoured than he, nor more zealous in attachment to his Master. His example calls upon those, who are entering upon their career of moral obligation and responsibility, to do that which the Wise-man calls upon them in words to do ; namely, to "remember their Creator in the days of their youth^y:" and of this we may be sure, that, if they do so remember him, he will not forget them in the time of age, nor forsake them when they are old and

^x Dr. Lardner.

^y Eccles. xiii. 1.

grey-headed. If youth present peculiar temptations to withdraw us from the service of God, it endows us also with peculiar ability to serve him. "I have written unto you, young men," saith our Apostle, "because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one^z." The strength of opening manhood is never so well employed, as, after the example of our Apostle himself, in practising subserviency to God's revealed will, and in triumphing over its spiritual enemies: it lends a grace and a beauty to religion, and produces an abundant harvest of good works and of glory to God. "Let no man despise thy youth^a."

Low station is no obstacle to God's favour. St. John was the son of a fisherman: recommended to our Saviour, neither by refinement of education, nor by honourable employment, he was diligently engaged in the labours of an humble occupation, when chosen to accompany his Lord. For those indeed, whom it hath pleased God to place in the higher states of life, it is right that they should endeavour to perform the duties of their stations, by a due cultivation of their talents, by the acquirement of suitable accomplishments, and by acting up to

^a 1 John ii. 14.

^z 1 Tim. iv. 12.

the rank in society, to which by the good providence of God they are born and designated. Nor can such persons act more agreeably to the will of God, nor more effectually for his glory and their own salvation. At the same time the poor and lowly may reflect, that their poverty and lowliness does not preclude them from the enjoyment of God's favour and his love in Christ Jesus, provided they be diligent in discharging the duties of their station. "The beloved disciple of Jesus" was, when called upon to follow him, "mending his net" on the lake of Gennesareth.

Friendship is not inconsistent with the spirit and principles of the Gospel. It is not indeed the subject of an injunction, as if the formation of particular attachments were a duty to be practised : but it as certainly is not forbidden, as if it were a vice or a weakness to be avoided. In several passages of our Lord's teaching, the existence of friendship, and the natural disposition of the heart of man towards it, are recognized plainly and with complacency. And this example of his conduct, in admitting St. John to a special share of his intimacy and regard, is a proof that friendship needs not to be discouraged. Charity for all men, brotherly love for all our brethren in Christ, is unquestionably prescribed to us : but such regard

and good will for all is not incompatible with a higher degree of affection for some. And surely, if amongst the twelve, whom our Lord selected for his constant companions, there was one peculiarly distinguished as "the disciple whom he loved," we need not scruple to love some more than others.

Why our Lord bestowed on this disciple a larger portion of his love, we are not distinctly told. Different reasons have been surmised, of which no one is more probable than St. John's amiable and affectionate disposition. Certain it is that St. John returned his Master's love by faithful attachment to his person, and earnest zeal in his service, as well as by a filial attention to the widowed mother of his Lord, whom from the hour of his Lord's death he "took unto his own home:" thereby teaching us, that for the great love which Christ hath manifested towards us we ought to make every return in our power, by fidelity toward himself, and by kind and affectionate conduct to those afflicted ones, and to those sincere performers of the will of his heavenly Father, whom he is pleased to regard in the light of his own relations.

We have seen that the good qualities of St. John were not free from a mixture of human

frailty, so as to have brought upon him the reproof of our Saviour, to which however he submitted with modesty and humility, and appears in consequence to have corrected his fault. In his error we may discern a lesson of the proneness of human nature to deviate from the right path, even in good things; and may be prompted to watch over our religious zeal, lest it betray us into language or conduct, which Christian piety and charity may not warrant. Again, if the error of the Apostle may set us on our guard against the failings incident to our nature, his correction of his error may be an example for us to follow, and may lead us to cherish modesty, and forbearance, and gentleness, and love to others. It is remarkable that St. John, who was one of those that proposed the question to his Master, "Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them?" testified in after life the warmest charity for all men; and was so far from entertaining a desire to call down fire upon offenders, that he considered it to be a duty of Christians, out of love to God and their Redeemer, to "lay down their lives for the brethren."

For encouraging us in the cultivation of this Christian spirit, no mode is preferable to the study of our Apostle's writings. The dis-

courses of our Saviour, recorded by St. John in his Gospel, are in this respect invaluable: and his own exhortations in his Epistles are admirably calculated to produce the same effect. They perpetually inculcate that precept, which is said to have been the constant subject of his preaching, when the infirmity of age prevented him from descanting upon other topicks, "Little children, love one another."

In adverting to St. John's writings it should be observed, that he was excellently qualified to give a narrative of our Lord's life and ministry; such a narrative, as might be received by the Church with the most complete and implicit confidence. He had been with him from the earliest period of his ministry, and was admitted to the most private passages of it, till he saw him expire upon the cross; and again he was with him after his resurrection, till he saw him taken up into heaven: so that he could say with the greatest propriety, and with peculiar emphasis, "that which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the word of life: (for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto

you^b.” His Gospel therefore is highly valuable upon its own account. “He that saw bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe.”

It is valuable also as a confirmation of the others. According to the testimony of antiquity, St. John had seen the three preceding Gospels, and bore testimony to the truth of them by composing his own with a manifest reference to them. As no one could have been more capable of judging of their merit, so the approbation of no one could have been more precious.

It is further valuable as supplemental to the others. For several doctrinal discourses of our Saviour, and for several of his miracles, which have been already specified, we are indebted solely to St. John's Gospel: and in his narrative of the crucifixion and resurrection, which harmonizes in general with the other narratives of those great events, several circumstances are recorded which are not noticed by the other Evangelists. Whilst his silence with regard to many things, which had been already related, is a proof that he was satisfied with the previous relations of those things; his introduction of other things, which had been previously

^a 1 John i. 1, 2, 3. ^b John xix. 35.

omitted, stamps an additional and peculiar value on his Gospel, wherein alone they are related.

It is moreover valuable in a very high degree, as insisting specially upon the principal mysteries of the Christian faith, the divinity, incarnation, and atonement of Christ. The other Evangelists had chiefly insisted on the things relating to our Lord's humanity: St. John dwells more particularly on his divinity, on which his statements are express and copious. And "let it be remembered that this book, which contains so much additional information relative to the doctrines of Christianity, and which may be considered as a standard of faith for all ages, was written by that Apostle, who is known to have enjoyed, in a greater degree than the rest, the affection and confidence of the divine Author of our religion, and to whom was given a special revelation concerning the state of the Christian church in all succeeding ages^d." To the importance of our Apostle's teaching attention is particularly drawn in the Collect of the day, wherein we are instructed to beseech our "merciful Lord to cast his bright beams of light upon his church, that it being enlightened by the doctrine of his blessed

^d Bp. Tomline.

Apostle and Evangelist St. John, may so walk in the light of his truth, that it may at length attain to the light of everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

As St. John was the youngest of the Apostles, so his life was prolonged to the greatest age. Whilst it pleased God that his fellows in the Apostolate should for the most part glorify God by violent and premature deaths; that James for example, "the brother of John," should be killed by the sword of Herod, and that Peter, his intimate companion, should perish on the cross by the decree of Nero; it pleased him also that John himself should escape the malice of the Jew and the fury of heathen persecution, and glorify God by a life extended beyond the ordinary limit of the life of man. Whilst by the sufferings, which he actually underwent, the imprisonment, the stripes, the banishment, perhaps the still harder trial of the burning caldron, he fulfilled his Lord's warning, that he should "drink of his cup and be baptized with his baptism;" by his survival of the destruction of Jerusalem, and in the end by dying in peace, he fulfilled his Lord's promise, that he should tarry till he should come. And since, as the Wise-man saith, "a hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be worn in the way of righteousness," such it was in an eminent degree in the

instance of "the disciple whom Jesus loved," who failed not, through the long course of his protracted pilgrimage, to "let his light shine before men, that they might see his good works, and glorify his Father which was in heaven." Let us endeavour so to believe as he believed, and so to act as he acted. Thus may we have grace, whether living or dying, whether in youth or in old age, to glorify God in Christ Jesus, our Lord: and when our Redeemer shall say to us, as he did to the beloved disciple, "Surely, I come quickly," may we, whether young or old, be able to answer in the words of the same disciple, "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus^e."

Collects.

"MERCIFUL Lord, we beseech thee to cast thy bright beams of light upon thy Church, that it being enlightened by the doctrine of thy blessed Apostle and Evangelist St. John may so walk in the light of thy truth, that it may at length attain to the light of everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen*^f."

"O God, who hast prepared for them that love thee such good things as pass man's understanding; Pour into our hearts such love

^e Rev. xxii. 20.

^f Collect for the Day.

toward thee, that we, loving thee above all things, may obtain thy promises, which exceed all that we can desire; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. *Amen*^g.”

“O LORD, who hast taught us that all our doings without charity are nothing worth; Send thy Holy Ghost, and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of charity, the very bond of peace and of all virtues, without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before thee: Grant this for thine only Son, Jesus Christ’s sake. *Amen*^h.”

Among the planets heavenly bright,
Which round their Sun of glory shine,
No orb emits a purer light,
A holier radiance, JOHN, than thine.

Apostle thou of Christ the Lord;
Prophet of scenes, to come decreed;
Historian of the incarnate Word;
Martyr in will, if not in deed:

Yet by another name we deem
Thy claim to high renown approved,
A name, of equal praise the theme,
“Disciple, by thy Master loved.”

^g Collect for the 6th Sunday after Trinity. ^h Collect for
Quinquagesima Sunday.

That disciple whom Jesus loved. 113

Be ours to mark His portrait fair,
Whom thy recording pencil drew;
Be ours to mark thy faithful care,
To his divine commandments true;

To note thy life; to see thee fling
The beams of sacred truth abroad;
And soar with thee on eagle wing,
And view unblam'd the throne of God.

And may our faith, blest Saint, like thine,
By love to God and man be proved;
That we in our degree may shine,
“Disciples, by our Master loved.”

HOLY INNOCENTS.

The children that were in Bethlehem.

MATT. ii. 16.

HISTORICAL NOTICE OF THE HOLY INNOCENTS.

THE commemoration of the death of the infants slain at Bethlehem has been celebrated in the assemblies of Christians from the primitive times; as appears from a work which has been ascribed to Origen, who lived between 1500 and 1600 years ago. They are reckoned amongst the martyrs by Tertullian and Cyprian: and the Christian poet Prudentius has an elegant and beautiful address to these young sufferers for their Redeemer, in one of his hymns, quoted and translated by Bishop Horne in his discourse upon "Rachel Comforted." The occasion of the festival being introduced at this period of the annual services of the Church has been mentioned in our notice of St. Stephen.

The history of their death is briefly related in the second chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel, part of which forms the Gospel for the day. From this and from the former part of the chapter we learn, that on the birth of the Saviour, Christ the Lord, at Bethlehem, certain Gentiles of learning and distinction, called Magi in the original language, and "wise men" in our translation, came under the divine direction from the east to pay him their homage. On their arrival at Jerusalem they inquired where was the new-born King of the Jews, and they signified their purpose of worshipping him. The whole city was "troubled" with a variety of emotions, according as the intelligence affected the various views and sentiments of the different descriptions of inhabitants: and in particular "Herod the King," Herod the Great, as he is sometimes called to distinguish him from other princes of the same name, was disturbed with jealous apprehensions and terrors, dreading a formidable rival to himself and his family in the throne of Judea, of which under the patronage first of Antony, and afterwards of Augustus, and by a decree of the Roman Senate, he was at that time possessed.

By consulting the chief priests and expounders of the law, he first ascertained that Bethlehem was the place appointed by ancient

prophecy for the birth-place of the promised Governor of Israel: and he then sent the wise men forward to Bethlehem with a strict injunction, that, having found the child, they should report their discovery to him; professing his intention to "come and worship him also;" but cherishing the secret purpose of "seeking to destroy him."

But the providence of God watched over the preservation of his Son. By the special warning of God, the wise men did not return to Herod, but "departed into their own country another way:" and Joseph also, by a similar warning, "arose, and took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt. Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men," that is, deluded or disappointed by them, "was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts" or confines "thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men."

This is St. Matthew's account of the transaction: and it is confirmed by the testimony of ancient Christian writers: by Justin Martyr, who wrote before the middle of the second century; by Irenæus who lived in the same

century; and by Origen in the third^a. Not to mention any more references to Christian writers, Herod's slaughter of the infants is also alluded to as a known truth by Macrobius a Roman writer, who lived at the latter end of the fourth and the beginning of the fifth century, but affirms that he compiled his history out of earlier books. By putting Syria instead of Bethlehem he makes it probable, that he did not borrow this part of his narrative from St. Matthew: and being also as he was a bigotted heathen, it is not likely that he should have been partial to the Gospel history^b.

The manner, in which Macrobius alludes to it, is this: "When Augustus had heard that among the children within two years of age, which Herod King of the Jews commanded to be slain in Syria, his own son had been killed, he said, It is better to be Herod's swine than his son^c." Herod in fact had no son of that age: one of his sons however, Antipater, was put to death by Herod's command very near the time of the slaughter of the Bethlehemitish children. And the mention of this slaughter of his son, together with that of the children,

^a Dr. Lardner. ^b Archbishop Secker's Sermons, vol. v.

^c Dr. Lardner. Dr. Hales's Chronology.

although they possibly happened at a month's distance from each other, is by no means enough to discredit the testimony of Macrobius; which on the contrary will be greatly confirmed, if we believe Sixtus Senensis, a learned man who lived between two and three centuries ago; who affirms, that he read the same account with that of Macrobius, in a part now lost of Dion Cassius, a Pagan historian, a hundred years older than Macrobius. A book also of uncertain date, written in Hebrew by a most virulent Jew, and intitled Toldoth Jeshu, admits Herod to have done the deed^d.

In truth if he had not done it, there is no imaginable reason why it should have been attributed to him. The story was not at all essential to St. Matthew's design: St. Matthew therefore could have had no temptation, even if we can suppose him wicked enough, to forge it. Besides, it might have been easily disproved when he wrote, if it was not true, especially as he is understood to have written in Judea. Doubtless, if he had been so wicked and so rash as to attempt such a forgery, the early writers against Christianity would have charged him with it: but of this there is not the least appearance, nor, on the other hand, of

^d Abp. Secker.

any attempt to defend him, on the part of the early writers in favour of Christianity, which was to have been expected, had his fidelity been impeached. The silence of both parties therefore, in the way of attack and defence, is a tacit proof that the Evangelist stated the fact correctly: whilst a more direct proof is afforded by the manner, in which the early Christian writers actually do speak of it, not in the way of controversy, but as a well-known and admitted truth. The passage cited from Macrobius also shews at least, that Herod's slaughter of the infants was a transaction, well known in his time, and not contested by the heathens: and, if he transcribed the passage from some more ancient author, it is moreover a proof that the transaction was well known and admitted in the time of that author also: although it may happen not to be mentioned in any extant work of any other early writer, except St. Matthew.

But indeed nothing is more natural or more common, than that one historian should record facts, which are not mentioned by another. Many facts stand upon the credit of a single writer, though not noticed by the historians of contemporary events. And it were unreasonable indeed to discredit the narrative of St. Matthew in this respect, only, because a similar

narrative is not to be found in other authors of the same period. Many reasons may be, and indeed have been given, particularly by Archbishop Secker and Dr. Lardner, why this event was not likely to be mentioned by heathen historians of that time; and why it probably was not mentioned by Josephus, the Jewish historian: with respect to whom in particular it has been well observed by the learned Primate, that "as he wrote long after St. Matthew, whose Gospel must have been well known in Judea, he might, and surely would, have contradicted him in this point, if he could; which he hath not." Thus the silence of Josephus is so far from being an argument against St. Matthew's correctness, that it is rather an argument in its favour.

Shocking to our feelings as this slaughter of the infants is, and repugnant to the dictates of our common nature, there is nothing in the character and conduct of Herod to render it improbable: rather the event is consistent with every thing which history has recorded of that tyrannical and sanguinary prince. His whole history, written not by a Christian but by a Jew, fully proves that no degree of cruelty was improbable concerning one of so savage a disposition. Besides the fierce wars, in which his boundless ambition engaged him, he was con-

tinually committing murders in cold blood : and the victims of his jealous fury were not strangers only, but amongst others his nearest relations and even his own children^c. Aristobulus, brother of his wife Mariamne, was murdered by his directions at 18 years of age, because the people of Jerusalem had shewn some affection for his person. He put to death Hyrcanus, grandfather of Mariamne, then 80 years of age, a man who had saved the life of Herod, and who, in his youth and in the vigour of his life and in all the revolutions of fortune, had testified a mild and peaceable disposition. Herod's beloved wife herself, the beautiful and virtuous Mariamne, had a publick execution ; and soon after her mother Alexandra was put to death. Alexander and Aristobulus, his two sons by Mariamne, were strangled in prison by his order, upon groundless suspicions, as it seems, when they were of man's estate, were married, and had children. The name of his eldest son Antipater may be added to this catalogue of domestick slaughter ; though he seems to have been a worthless and abandoned character, who deserved his fate.

In his last sickness, a little before he died, Herod sent orders throughout Judea, requiring

^c Dr. Lardner.

the presence of all the chief men of the nation at Jericho. His orders were obeyed: for they were enforced with no less a penalty than that of death. On their arrival at Jericho, he caused them to be confined in the Circus: and he then conjured those who were in power about him, by their love to him and their fidelity to God, to let the soldiers in upon these men and kill them, so soon as he should expire, that all Judea and every family might then, however unwillingly, mourn at his death. The promise was given, though the order was not executed; for those, to whom it was intrusted, were not wicked enough to perform, what they had been made solemnly to undertake. But it has been correctly remarked, that "the history of this his most wicked design takes off all objection against the truth of murdering the innocents which may be made from the incredibility of so barbarous and horrid an act. For this thoroughly shews, that there can be imagined nothing, so cruel, barbarous, and horrid, which this man was not capable of doing. In most of his actions," adds Dr. Prideaux, "as above described in this history, may be read the character of a most bloody, cruel, and wicked tyrant; but in none more than these two." Dr. Lardner also has observed, that "almost all the executions cited by him, as

instances of Herod's cruelty, were sacrifices to his state jealousy and love of empire. And the slaughter, which St. Matthew has given an account of, was made upon the occasion of tidings brought to Jerusalem, of the birth of one who was 'King of the Jews.'

As to the number of innocent children sacrificed on this occasion, that is matter of much uncertainty, and has been also of considerable exaggeration. St. Matthew states in our translation, that "Herod sent forth and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under." By "children" it is evident that male children only are intended. The phrase "from two years old and under" is perhaps intended to signify children under, or arrived at, two years complete; or probably it may mean no more, than such as had entered on their second year, or were under that age: reckoning "not from two years completed, but from two years begun." Bethlehem was but a small village, and "its coasts," or confines, not extensive. And further it is likely, that, as the barbarity of the emissaries of Herod might not keep full pace with his own, so every possible method of concealment or escape would be practised by

(Dr. Doddridge.

the parents of the children; and thus, although the order was issued, and with a general latitude of expression may be said to have been executed, against "all," nevertheless some of the children may in fact not have suffered. The amount of the massacre, after all, we have not means of ascertaining correctly: it has been calculated with seeming probability to have been fifty at the utmost^b: but thus much can hardly be disputed, that those who speak of thousands of children having been slaughtered, (the number defined has been 14000,) as they have no sufficient grounds or proof of their assertion, assert likewise that which is not reasonably intitled to credit, but is rather to be ranked among fabulous and legendary talesⁱ.

REFLEXIONS.

In reflecting upon the atrocious deed, which, after all that may be alleged in extenuation of the number of the victims, is in its nature one of the basest and foulest upon record, our attention is forcibly drawn to the wickedness of him under whose authority it was perpetrated. Herod, the king of Judea, is hereby placed before us as a monument of the excessive deceitfulness and desperate wickedness of the human heart, when suffered to follow the impulse of

^a Abp. Secker. ^b Mr. Townsend's New Testament, chronologically arranged. ⁱ Abp. Secker.

its own vicious affections, unrestrained by divine grace, and disregarding the obligations of the divine will and its responsibility to a supreme lawgiver and judge. Herod was devoted, body and soul, to the maintenance of his royal power: and for the attainment of that end he halted not at the practice of any means, however impious and unnatural. He supposed the life of Jesus to be an obstacle in the way of his own dominion, and he determined to remove it. By craft and hypocrisy he first endeavoured to compass his purpose through the instrumentality of the eastern sages: disappointed by them, he had recourse to open violence, caring not, in the recklessness of his jealousy and rage, what other innocent victims he might include in his sentence of destruction, provided he might reach the one, whom he dreaded as an impediment to his ambitious career. Let his graceless resolution and enterprise be a warning to ourselves: let it caution us not to give the rein to the craving desires of a corrupt nature; let it caution us particularly against the delusions of power and superior station; let it guard us against covering our evil designs with the cloke of dissimulation and affected religion; let it guard us against carrying them into effect by cruelty or any other forbidden course; let it prompt us to "watch and pray that we enter not into temptation;" but that God, of his in-

finite mercy in Christ Jesus our Lord, will give us strength when we are tempted, and "deliver us from evil!"

Again, Herod stands before us as a monument of disappointment, as well as of guilt. Whatever artifice he conceived for the concealment of his design, whatever policy he practised for its accomplishment, "his heart was opened to the eye of heaven; and the sun was not more visible than his dark purpose was to God; and it succeeded accordingly^k." The child was sent away: the wise men were warned not to return: "Herod was mocked, and was exceeding wroth, and sent forth and slew all the children in Bethlehem and in all the coasts thereof." But the infants, whom he would have wished to spare, he destroyed: the infant, whom alone he wished to destroy, escaped him^l. So he plunged himself into the deepest guilt; and gave up his memory to endless infamy; and nevertheless failed of that which he sought. Thus was Herod "mocked," not so much of the wise men, though by their means indeed, as of God himself: who will ever turn into foolishness the counsels framed against himself, or against any thing of which he himself hath undertaken the protection; and

^k Bp. Jeremy Taylor's *Life of Christ*. ^l Abp. Secker.

who in this particular case acted according to the prediction delivered many ages before concerning Herod, and all resembling him, “Why do the heathen so furiously rage together? and why do the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth stand up, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his Anointed. He that dwelleth in heaven shall laugh them to scorn: the Lord shall have them in derision^m.”

Further, Herod stands before us also a monument of punishment. Dr. Jortin has wisely and piously remarked, that “there is usually much rashness and presumption in pronouncing, that the calamities of sinners are particular judgments of God: yet if from sacred and profane, from ancient and modern historians, a collection was made of all the cruel persecuting tyrants, who delighted in tormenting their fellow creatures, and who died not the common death of all men, nor were visited after the visitation of all men, but whose plagues were horrible and strange; even a sceptick would be moved at the evidence, and would be apt to suspect, that the hand of God was in it. But,” adds our learned remarker, “the case of the persecuting emperors

^m Ps. ii. 1, 2, 4.

and princes is still more particular, if we consider, first, the matter of fact, and secondly the prophecies concerning it."

The prophecies, which he subsequently adduces, are those in the second and in the hundred and tenth Psalms. In exemplifying the fact he remarks, "Herod the Great was the first persecutor of Christianity, as he attempted to destroy Christ in his infancy, and for that wicked end slew the male children at Bethlehem. The miseries, which befel this inhuman tyrant and his family, are recorded by Josephus; and his calamitous death, and long and grievous sufferings before it, by a burning fever, a voracious appetite, a difficulty of breathing, swellings in his limbs, loathsome ulcers within and without, breeding lice and worms; violent torments and convulsions; so that he endeavoured to kill himself, but was restrained by his friends."

Other judicious writers have regarded "the dreadful and exemplary manner, in which Herod was called, soon after" this murder of the innocents "to his final account," as a "dispensation of Providence;" as a plain proof "that the hand of God was then in a very signal manner upon him for the punishment of his wicked-

ⁿ Abp. Secker.

ness°. But although a striking, he was by no means a singular instance of the punishment inflicted upon those, who in the early ages of the Christian Church "took counsel against the Lord and against his Anointed."

In pursuance of his former remark, Dr. Jortin has largely exemplified the position by the adduction of numerous cases. It may be sufficient for us here, and it may be especially useful, to observe, that those persecutors whose names are most familiar to ordinary Christians, as persons whose persecution of Christianity is recorded in the sacred writings, generally experienced a premature and a terrible fate. Herod Antipas, who beheaded John the Baptist, and treated Christ contemptuously when he was brought before him, was defeated in battle, stripped of his dominions, and sent into banishment with his infamous wife Herodias. Pontius Pilate, who condemned Christ to death, was not long after deposed and banished, and died by his own hands. The high priest Caiaphas, who also condemned Christ for fear of disobliging the Romans, was, about three years after, ignominiously turned out of his office by the Roman governor. Grandson of him who had massacred the infants at Bethle-

° Dean Prideaux.

hem, and nephew of the murderer of John the Baptist, Herod Agrippa "killed James the brother of John," and put Peter in prison with intent to kill him also: and soon after "the angel of the Lord smote him, and he was eaten of worms," as his grandfather had been before him, "and gave up the ghost." Ananias the high priest persecuted Paul, and insolently and illegally "commanded them that stood by, to smite him on the mouth. And Paul said, God shall smite thee, thou whited wall." And God did smite him. For Ananias, after having contributed to the ruin of his country by a powerful faction which he had raised, and which produced many calamities, was slain after the revolt of the Jews together with his brother; and fell, not by the hands of his natural enemies the Romans, but by another faction of his own countrymen the Jews, which was headed by his own son. The most awful however and most memorable example is the case of the great body of the Jewish nation, who with their priests and elders at their head had rejected and crucified "the Lord's Christ." The calamities which they suffered in the siege of Jerusalem, and the extremity of horror and despair to which they were reduced, were unquestionably inflicted upon them as a punishment for their sin. "That generation did not

pass away," before their dreadful imprecation of Almighty vengeance was fearfully verified. "His blood was upon them and upon their children."

We return to the more immediate subject of our reflexions, and we remark, that it may appear strange to some that God did not defeat the malice of Herod, and rescue his Son from the menaced destruction, by some mode which did not permit the slaughter of these innocent children. It has been surmised indeed, that their slaughter was intended as a punishment upon their parents, for some supposed infidelity on their part, in not receiving the blessed Virgin into their dwellings, or in not owning and worshipping our Saviour at his birth^p. The history gives us no intimation of any such intention. It may be wiser therefore and better to leave the fact where the Scripture leaves it; and to resolve the whole into the good pleasure of Almighty God, who is the Lord of his creatures, and hath absolute dominion over their lives^q; and who exercises his dominion according to the various dispensations of his providence, sometimes in the ordinary way of natural dissolution, sometimes by the fire or the

^p Mr. Nelson's Companion to the Festivals.

^q Bp. Jeremy Taylor.

pestilence, and sometimes by the sword. Still let it be observed, that in the present case he had a particular and a discernible end to serve by the event, and he “made these infants to glorify him by their deaths;” forasmuch as he caused to appear thereby the extreme malice of Herod, and the imminent danger and peril of the child Jesus; and thus magnified his own wisdom in contriving, and his own power in accomplishing, the preservation of his Son. In this manner, according to the Psalmist’s words, he “ordained strength,” or gave additional evidence to the Christian faith; and by so doing “perfected praise” to his holy name, even from the dying cries which proceeded out of the mouths of these babes and sucklings^r.

Meanwhile with respect to the infants themselves it may be observed, that as their destiny for the present was at the absolute disposal of the Lord of all, so also was their destiny for the future; and that if he saw good, let us not say according to the rule of his equity, but in the fulness of his mercy and compassion, to grant them a compensation for their premature loss of life in an abiding state of superior happiness, there was no one to gainsay his decision. It was accordingly usual with the ancient

^r Abp. Secker.

writers of the Church to represent them, as "martyrs not in will, but in deed"; as incapable of choosing to suffer for Christ, but as having actually so suffered; as disqualified by their age for joining the battle, but nevertheless capable of wearing the crown: and in pursuance it was usual with them to suppose, that Almighty God supplied by his manner of entertaining the sacrifice what was defective in the self-devotion of these infants; and so received them to himself, "that, as their misery and death, so also their glorification, might have the same Author in the free exercise of his will." And surely, though nothing be expressly and peculiarly written concerning their future fate, there is nothing at variance with holy writ, nothing presumptuous, in believing, that having been thus by suffering on Christ's account secured from sin, it may have been their lot, doubtless on his account also, to "pass through the grave and gate of death" into the regions of life and glory; being not defiled with sensual pleasures, and having left the world in virgin innocence; being truly redeemed from among men, and being a sort of first fruits unto God and to the Lamb".

But not to speculate further upon their con-

¹ Bp. Sparrow. ² Bp. Jeremy Taylor. ³ Dean Stanhope.

dition, we may derive from the history a lesson applicable to our own circumstances. For thus much we may be taught by their suffering, that affliction and persecution even unto death may be undergone in this world, without deranging the purposes of that over-ruling Power who permits them, and without impeachment of the innocence of those by whom they are undergone. And we may be well assured, that the more nearly we approach to the purity from sin of these innocent children, the more qualified we shall be to "glorify God by our deaths," whenever and however it may please him of his great mercy to take our souls unto himself; and to "follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth amongst those who are without fault before the throne of God^x."

This is one of the best uses which we can make of this festival: namely, whilst we commemorate the children who are the subject of it, to cultivate in ourselves the good qualities by which young children are distinguished; their humility, simplicity, and contentedness; their freedom from deliberate and habitual wickedness; their affection for their parents; their implicit confidence in their parents' protection; and their ready obedience to their

^x Rev. xiv. 4, 5.

will. And this is the use to which the Church directs us, when in the Collect of the day she teaches us thus to pray. "O Almighty God, who out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast ordained strength, and madest infants to glorify thee by their deaths; mortify and kill all vices in us, and so strengthen us by thy grace, that by the innocency of our lives, and constancy of our faith even unto death, we may glorify thy holy name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*"

"^vALMIGHTY and everlasting God, whose righteousness is like the strong mountains, and thy judgments like the great deep; and who, by that barbarous murder as on this day committed, hast taught us that" neither unripe age, nor unoffending innocence, "is more secure from violence than from natural death: teach us also hereby so to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. And grant, that neither the splendor of any thing that is great nor the conceit of any thing that is good in us, may withdraw our eyes from looking upon ourselves as sinful dust and ashes: but that we may press forward to the prize of the high calling that is before us, in faith and patience, humility and meekness,

^v From the Form of prayer on the day of King Charles the First's martyrdom.

mortification and self-denial, charity and constant perseverance unto the end : and all this for thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ's sake ; to whom with thee and the Holy Ghost be all honour and glory, world without end. *Amen.*

Heard ye the cry of loud lament,
Through RAMAH's street that runs ?
'Tis RACHEL's voice in anguish sent :
The mother wails her sons.

Forbear to wail thy children's fate ;
Restrain thy bursting tears :
And trust, that in a better state
A happier lot is theirs.

What tho' the tyrant's ruthless sway
Their infant blood hath spilt ;
The sword, that lops their life away,
Secures their soul from guilt.

Nor fond the precious hope we deem,
That He, at whom in vain
Was aimed the stroke which fell on them,
Hath cleansed their inborn stain :

That God, who chose the martyr's place
For them thus soon to fill,
Hath with the fulness of his grace
Supplied their want of will :

That they, in infant purity
The path of death who trod,
Rais'd with the pure in heart shall see
The presence of their God.

ST. PAUL.

Saul, who also is called Paul. Acts xiii. 9.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE OF ST. PAUL.

THERE is a peculiarity in the festival of this day; in that it is commemorative, not of the death or martyrdom of the Saint who is the subject of it, but of his conversion to the Christian faith; a peculiarity, the cause of which is to be found in the strangeness and importance of that event; in the wonderful occurrences which preceded it; in the testimony which it bore to God's grace; and in its momentous consequences to the Church at large, as well as to the individual who was thus brought into her fellowship, "Saul, who is also called Paul."

The original name of the Apostle was Saul; and by that name he is called in the early periods of his history. Whether he was at first called by both names, the one indicating him

to be by extraction a Jew, the other by privilege a Roman citizen; whether he was so called, merely in compliance with an usage for those Jews who were much connected with Greece and Rome to assume a name more familiar to foreigners than their own; whether he changed his name together with his religion, when from a Pharisee he became a believer in Christ; or whether he acquired his latter name from his conversion of Sergius Paulus to the faith of Christ, being first called Paul in consequence of that event by the family of the Roman proconsul: certain it is that upon this last occasion the name of Paul is first attributed to the Apostle by the Evangelist St. Luke, who had until that time continually called him Saul, and continually afterwards calls him by this new surname; a name, by which he has been constantly described through succeeding ages.

St. Paul was, as he himself informs us, “of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews, a Pharisee and the son of a Pharisee.” He had a sister whose son was a Christian; a young man, whose discreet conduct was of great service to the Apostle, when a prisoner at Jerusalem, and who is deserving of our grateful recollection. And some of his kinsmen appear to have been

believers in the Gospel, and to have been so before himself: which may be reckoned a proof of the virtue and piety of this family ^a.

He was born at Tarsus, the chief city of Cilicia, "no mean city," a place celebrated for philosophy and polite literature: and he was by birth intitled to the privileges of a Roman citizen. In early life he was probably instructed in the accomplishments of his native city, and thus became a master of Greek learning, his acquaintance with which is shewn by several passages in his speeches and Epistles: certainly he was for some time educated in Jerusalem under Gamaliel, a celebrated Jewish Rabbi, by whom he was "taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers," and made great "proficiency in the Jewish religion," and in "all customs and questions which are among the Jews." To these branches of education was added instruction in the business of tent-making, according to a constant principle and practice of the Jews, who esteemed it a necessary part of education, for even their most learned Rabbis to be instructed in some manual trade, whereby, if occasion required, they might be able to maintain themselves. The trade, to which our Apostle was

^a Dr. Lardner.

brought up, was an honest but mean course of life; and, as Chrysostom observes, an argument that his parents were not of the nobler and better rank^b.

St. Paul's natural abilities were splendid and powerful; his apprehension quick, his feelings lively, his resolution firm and immovable; and he was thus well qualified to maintain and propagate such principles, as he should judge proper to be espoused. Zealous in the service of God, of conscience pure and void of offence, in life unblameable, of integrity uncorrupt; he was thus qualified to espouse the principles, of the justice of which he saw reason to be convinced. His appeals to the Jews, to whom was known his manner of life from the beginning, and the unfeigned thankfulness and satisfaction with which he reflects upon the motives which actuated his conduct, prove the uprightness of St. Paul, and his obedience to the dictates of his conscience according to the knowledge which he possessed. Thus in his zeal for the Jewish law, his hereditary religion, and that in the principles of which he had been carefully educated, he was at first a bitter enemy of the faith of the Gospel, and a furious opposer of all who made profession of it.

^b Dr. Cave.

He was "consenting to the death^c" of the first martyr Stephen : and in "the great persecution against the Church which ensued, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women, committed them to prison;" "breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord," "persecuting this way unto the death," "punishing them oft in every synagogue, and compelling them to blaspheme;" "being exceedingly mad against them, and persecuting them even unto strange cities^d."

In pursuance of this object he applied to the high priest at Jerusalem, and procured a commission from him and the Jewish council, addressed to the synagogues at Damascus the capital of Syria, that if he found there any professors of the Gospel, men or women, he might apprehend them and "bring them bound to Jerusalem." It was on this journey to Damascus that his miraculous conversion took place, of which St. Luke has given an historical narration in the 9th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, appointed by the Church as the portion of Scripture for the Epistle on this festival; and of which St. Paul himself has given similar accounts in the 22d and 26th chapters of the

^c Acts viii. 1.

^d Acts ix. 1. xxii. 4, 5. xxvi. 11.

Acts, appointed for the second lessons respectively of the morning and evening services, and to which he has also made numerous allusions in his Epistles. From this period he became as zealous in the propagation of the Christian faith, of the heavenly origin of which he was now convinced, as he had previously been in hostility to it, and in defence of his paternal religion.

Paul having been baptized at Damascus by Ananias, a disciple specially commissioned by the Lord for the purpose, stayed but a short time there with the believers, and then went into Arabia; where it is reasonable to suppose that he was fully instructed by a particular revelation in the doctrine preached by Jesus Christ when here upon earth; in all the things said and done by him, in his sufferings, his crucifixion, his resurrection, and ascension: and in the fulfilment of the ancient prophecies in his person. Thus qualified by divine illumination, and by diligent reading of the holy Scriptures of the Old Testament, he returned from Arabia three years after his conversion, and "straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God." And thereupon proceeding from scene to scene in the appointed work of his ministry, he "shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem,

and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent, and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.* For it should be observed, that, although St. Paul's preaching of Christ is mentioned in the history in immediate connexion with his conversion, there is good reason to suppose, that he did not begin to preach till after his return from Arabia, according to what he says of himself in his Epistle to the Galatians: but St. Luke takes no notice of the intervening period of his sojourn in Arabia, probably because he did not discharge any part of his ministerial office in that country, and it was the Evangelist's business to limit his narration to the actual preaching of the Gospel: at least he may have omitted this early part of St. Paul's history, as he did afterwards his voyage to Crete, both being inconsiderable, compared with his more publick ministry in the populous cities and countries of Asia and Europe, which forms the principal part of the Acts of the Apostles, and to which the sacred historian hastens, after a cursory view of the earlier transactions^c.

The preaching of St. Paul was commenced with such strength and cogency of argument, as to "confound the Jews which dwelt at

^c Dr. Lardner, Dr. Hales.

Damascus.” In their indignation and resentment they formed a design upon his life : but the disciples found means to provide for his escape. Whereupon he went to Jerusalem ; and, when he was come thither, “ he assayed to join himself to the disciples ; but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple.” They well knew his former bigotry and persecution of the Church : they probably were not well acquainted with, or were not fully assured of, his miraculous conversion and the subsequent alteration in his conduct, by reason of the little intercourse which prevailed between Jerusalem and Damascus, and of the still less intercourse between Jerusalem and Arabia, whither St. Paul had retired : and the persecution, to which the Church in Judea still continued subject, naturally made its members fearful and cautious^f. By the intervention of Barnabas however, whose previous acquaintance with him is matter rather of conjecture than of certainty^g, but to whom he found means of giving a convincing account of his conversion, he was introduced to the Apostles then at Jerusalem, namely, James the Lord’s brother, and Peter^h: after which he appears to have been readily received by the disciples or believers in general.

^f Dr. Hales.^g Dr. Lardner.^h Gal. i. 18, 19.

“ And he was with them, coming in and going out at Jerusalem. And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians,” that is, the Greek proselytes to the Jewish religion, from whom his life was endangered. Whereupon, after fifteen days, the brethren, being apprised of his danger, brought him in safety to Cæsarea, and thence caused him to be conveyed to Tarsus¹.

Tarsus was now the chief city of Cilicia: but, although the native place of St. Paul, he appears not to have visited it, since he first went up to Jerusalem to study the law under Gamaliel. Here, or in the neighbouring “ regions of Syria and Cilicia^k,” he seems to have continued for about three years, preaching in the name of Jesus to native Jews and to proselytes of the Jewish religion. After that period, in company with Barnabas who had sought him at Tarsus for the purpose, he went to Antioch on the Orontes, the capital of Syria, and began to preach to the Gentiles, of whom a Church had been previously formed there, which had been increased by the preaching of Barnabas. “ And it came to pass that a whole year they assembled themselves with the Church, and taught much people^l.” In the

¹ Acts ix. 26—31.^k Gal. i. 21.^l Acts xi. 24—26.

following year he was commissioned, together with Barnabas, to convey the charitable contributions of the Syrian Christians to their poor brethren of Judea. During this visit to Jerusalem, he is supposed to have seen that vision, to which he adverts in his speech to the Jewish people in the 22d chapter of the Acts, announcing his approaching mission by the Lord to the Gentiles.

Upon his return to Antioch this mission took effect. The 13th chapter of the Acts commences with recording the separation of Paul and Barnabas, by the express appointment of the Holy Spirit, and by the prayers and imposition of hands of the prophets and teachers of the Church at Antioch, for the work whereunto the Holy Spirit had called them: and the succeeding chapters of the Acts are almost entirely occupied in describing the travels of the Apostle, and the different scenes and operations of his ministry, and the sufferings which he underwent, first in company with Barnabas, who was for some time his constant associate, attended by Mark ^m, "sister's son to Barnabas;" and afterwards with other companions, such as Silas, and Timothy, and Luke the Evangelist, and others ⁿ.

^m Acts xii. 25. xiii. 5.
18. xx. 4.

ⁿ Acts xv. 40. xvi. 3, 10. xviii.

The scenes of his ministry were varied throughout the chief regions and cities of the world. His travels extended at different times and in different directions, according as his sense of duty or the special designation of the Holy Spirit guided him, from Judea to Syria and the island of Cyprus; thence over the several provinces of Asia Minor; Cilicia, Pamphylia, Pisidia, Lycaonia, Phrygia, Galatia, Mysia, and the scriptural or Ephesian Asia; to Macedonia, and "round about unto Illyricum^o:" to Greece, to Crete, to Sicily, and to Italy; in which different regions he founded churches in various places, where the faith of Christ had not previously gained a footing, of which the churches in Galatia and those of Corinth, Ephesus, Philippi, and Thessalonica, are some of the most illustrious examples; and added the weight of his authority for the encouragement and confirmation of the faith in cities, where it was already established, as in Jerusalem, in Antioch, and in Rome.

In the course of these travels and of this preaching he gave frequent proof of his apostolical character by "the signs of an Apostle," which are sometimes described under the general term of "signs and wonders and mighty

^o Rom. xv. 19.

deeds^p:" and sometimes detailed in the narrative of particular miracles. At Paphos, the capital of Cyprus, he smote with blindness the sorcerer Elymas, "who sought to turn away the Roman Proconsul Sergius Paulus from the faith," and thus effected the conversion of that officer, who when he saw what was done "believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord^q." At Iconium, in Lycaonia, "the Lord gave testimony to the word of his grace," as preached by Paul and Barnabas, "and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands^r." At Lystra, Paul healed a man impotent in his feet, a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked; and caused him to stand upright on his feet, to leap and to walk^s. At Philippi, he cured a damsel, possessed with a spirit of divination; calling on it to come out of her^t. At Ephesus, "God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul; so that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them^u." At Troas, "a young man named Eutychus, had sunk down with sleep, and fallen down from the third loft, and was taken up dead: but Paul went down, and fell on him, and em-

^p 2 Cor. xii. 12.^q Acts xiii. 8—11.^r Acts xiv. 3.^s Acts xvi. 10.^t Acts xvi. 17, 18.^u Acts xix. 11, 12.

braced him, and said, Trouble not yourselves, for his life is in him: and they brought the young man alive^x." In the island of Melita, "the father of Publius, the chief man of the island, lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and laid his hands on him, and healed him. So when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the island, came and were healed^y."

These miracles are stated by St. Luke to have been wrought by our Apostle; but it is manifest that these are by no means the whole that were wrought by him. He himself informs us that he wrought "signs and wonders and mighty deeds" at Corinth^z: that he did the same at Thessalonica is not obscurely intimated by him in his first Epistle to the Thessalonians^a; and from his Epistle to the Galatian churches it is fully evident, that he "wrought miracles among them," and conferred on them gifts of the Holy Spirit^b: although it did not fall within the compendious plan of the Evangelist to record them. From those however which he has recorded, as well as from those which he has omitted, it may be well supposed that St. Paul wrought miracles in all or most other

^x Acts xx. 9.

^y Acts xxviii. 5.

^z 2 Cor. xii. 22.

^a 1 Thess. i. 5.

^b Gal. iii. 2, 5.

places, where he made any stay in preaching the Gospel ^c.

In some cases also the divine power was put forth in attestation of his mission, wherein the Apostle was rather the occasion or the subject of the miracle than the agent of it. Such was the case at Philippi, when, during the midnight imprisonment of Paul and Silas, "suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed ^d." Such again was the case in Melita, when "a viper having fastened on the hand of Paul," and the people being in expectation "that he should have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly, he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm ^e." And when at Lystra the people "having stoned Paul, and drawn him out of the city supposing he had been dead," the Apostle nevertheless, "as the disciples stood round about him, rose up and came into the city," the effect appears justly attributable to supernatural power exerted for the Apostle's preservation ^f.

His teaching was recommended by a forcible strain of eloquence, for which he was so distinguished, that when the people of Lystra would

^c Dr. Lardner.

^d Acts xvi. 26.

^e Acts xxviii. 5, 6.

^f Acts xiv. 19.

have done sacrifice to Barnabas and Paul, in acknowledgment of their sense of the divine power manifested by the miracles of the Apostles, they called Paul Mercurius, the reputed god of eloquence, "because he was the chief speaker^a." The book of the Acts contains numerous examples of his powers of oratory, marked by various excellent qualities, and adapted with singular propriety and ability to the different auditories, to which they were respectively addressed. Of this we have ample evidence in his arguments with the Jews of Antioch in Pisidia, and with the Gentiles whether of Lystra or of Athens, the former rude and illiterate, the latter a refined and learned people: in the frank exposition of his principles and conduct before the people of Jerusalem; in his skilful pleadings and forcible reasonings before Felix; in his persuasive vindication of himself and of his religion before Agrippa; and in his solemn and most pathetick farewell address to the elders of the Ephesian Church^b. These speeches of St. Paul form a considerable portion of the latter half of the Acts of the Apostles, in which his travels are detailed. They are, as effusions of eloquence, equal to any thing of the kind which the world contains. But they are infi-

^a Acts xiv. 12.

^b Acts xiii. 16, xiv. 12, xvii. 22, xxii. 1, xxiv. 10, xxvi. 2, xx. 17.

nitely more to be prized, as testimonies and examples of the well-established faith, of the sound understanding, of the "simplicity and godly sincerity," of the affectionate feelings, of the comprehensive charity, and of the deep and earnest devotion of this great Apostle.

The same qualities gave birth to and predominate in the Epistles, which he addressed to different Christian societies and individuals, who had been converted by him to the faith of Christ, or with whom his anxiety for the furtherance of the faith and the maintenance of it in its primitive purity had brought him into communication. The Epistles were written at several times and places as occasions prompted: and bear continual reference to local and temporary occurrences, whilst they abound likewise with the most important doctrines and admonitions of a general nature.

The order, assigned to them in the Canon of the New Testament, appears to have been regulated by the supposed dignity of the persons, to whom they were respectively addressed. But the order of their dates is different. The earliest were the two Epistles to the Thessalonians, written from Corinth about the 52d year of the Christian era; being indeed the earliest of all the Scriptures of the New Testament. From Corinth also, and at about the same pe-

riod, was written the Epistle to the Galatian Churches. To the Church of Corinth itself he addressed the former of his two Epistles, from Ephesus, about the year 57 : and towards the close of the same, or the beginning of the following year, having paid a second visit to Corinth, he wrote from thence to the Romans, whom at that time he had not visited, but had received an account of the state of their Church from Aquila and Priscilla, two Christians who were banished thence by the edict of the Emperor Claudius, and with whom St. Paul had lived during his former visit to Corinth.

From his second visit to Corinth on his return into Judea, he passed through Macedonia ; from which country, probably from Philippi, he wrote his second Epistle to the Corinthians. No Epistle appears to have been written in the interval between this date, namely, the 58th year of the Christian era, and the 61st. At the latter period the Apostle was a prisoner at Rome, where, as St. Luke informs us, “ he dwelt two years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no man forbidding him ;” and he there employed a portion of his time in writing letters to several of the Churches from which his personal attention was now of necessity

withheld. To this place and period are accordingly assigned the Epistles to the Ephesians, the Philippians, and the Colossians, which contain affecting allusions to the trial then undergone by him for the Gospel, "for which," says he, "I am an ambassador in bonds¹." At the same time he wrote his Epistle to Philemon, or rather towards the close of this period of his imprisonment; and also towards the close of his imprisonment, or perhaps after it was concluded, and from Rome or perhaps from some other part of Italy, his Epistle to the Hebrews; concerning which it is remarkable, that the Epistle is not designated by the name of the Apostle, according to his practice at other times; nor does it distinctly state who are the persons to whom it is addressed: the most general and the most probable opinion is, that it was addressed to those Christians of Judea, who had been converted from Judaism to the Gospel; and that he omitted his name, because he knew that it would not have much influence on the Hebrew Christians, to whom he was in general obnoxious, on account of his zeal in converting the Gentiles, and in maintaining the abolition of the Mosaick Law.

Thus the Epistles, which have been mentioned, fall within the portion of St. Paul's his-

¹ Eph. vi. 20.

tory, recorded in St. Luke's narrative. There remain the Epistles to Timothy and Titus, conveying to those "sons" of the Apostle "in the" Christian "faith" his instructions concerning the government of the Churches of Ephesus and of Crete, respectively intrusted to their Episcopal care. Of these Epistles the dates are not certain: but there is reason to believe, that the former Epistle to Timothy, and that to Titus, were written about the year 64, soon after the Apostle's first imprisonment at Rome, and from some part of Greece or Macedonia, in the course of his visitation of the churches: and that the second Epistle to Timothy was written from Rome, whither the Apostle had voluntarily returned, and where his exertions in preaching the Gospel had caused him to be imprisoned a second time; an imprisonment, which soon after the writing of this Epistle was terminated by his death.

These Epistles of St. Paul are permanent memorials of the indefatigable diligence and comprehensive vigilance and attention, with which he watched over the welfare of the Church in those parts, where he was prevented from bestowing his personal attendance. And we may remark generally in passing, as Arch-deacon Paley in his admirable work intitled "*Horæ Paulinæ*" has shewn in detail, how

these Epistles and the narrative of St. Luke in the Acts mutually illustrate and demonstrate the authenticity of each other. Meanwhile his sufferings for the Gospel were intense and frequent; and whether for number or magnitude perhaps unexampled. Various instances of them are specified in the Acts. At Damascus, soon after he entered on his ministerial labours, "the Jews took counsel to kill him.*** And they watched the gates day and night to kill him:" so that "the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket^k." In Jerusalem, where he took refuge, whilst "he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians, they went about to slay him: which when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Cæsarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus^l." At Antioch in Pisidia, "the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts^m." At Iconium, "there was an assault made both of the Gentiles and also of the Jews with their rulers to use them despitefully, and to stone them;" but "they were ware of it, and fled unto Lystraⁿ." To Lystra

^k Acts ix. 23.^l Acts ix. 29, 30.^m Acts xiii. 50.ⁿ Acts xiv. 6.

they were followed by "certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and having stoned Paul drew him out of the city, supposing that he had been dead^o." At Philippi, the masters of a certain damsel, from whom Paul had cast out a spirit of divination, "caught Paul and Silas, and drew them into the market place to the rulers.^{***} And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them. And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely: who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks^p." From Thessalonica, in consequence of the persecutions of the Jews, who "moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people," Paul and Silas were constrained to flee "by night unto Berea^q:" and from Berea, whither also the Jews of Thessalonica had followed them, and "stirred up the people," Paul was again compelled to seek safety by

^o Acts xiv. 19. ^p Acts xvi. 22—24. ^q Acts xvii. 10.

flight". At Corinth, "the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment seat" of the proconsul of Achaia, who however dismissed the accusation. At Ephesus, a tumult was raised by Demetrius a silversmith, and other "workmen of the like occupation," which endangered Paul and his companions, so that, "after the uproar was ceased," he departed from that city, and "came into Greece". In Greece, probably at Corinth, "as he was about to sail into Syria, the Jews laid wait for him," so that he was compelled to change his course, and "return through Macedonia". In Jerusalem, "the Jews which were of Asia, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him:" "and all the city was moved, and the people ran together, and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple," and "they went about to kill him". Rescued from this danger by the intervention of the chief captain of the Roman garrison, but still persecuted by the people, who with the greatest abhorrence demanded his death, and pronounced him "unfit to live," he was "bound with thongs," that he might be "examined by scourging," from which torture

¹ Acts xvii. 14.

² Acts xviii. 12.

³ Acts xix.

24. xx. 1.

⁴ Acts xx. 3.

⁵ Acts xxi. 27—31.

he delivered himself only by pleading his privileges as a Roman citizen, but was not "loosed from his bands" till the morrow⁷. By the Jewish high priest, before whom he was subsequently examined, a command contrary to the law was given, that he should be "smitten" by the bystanders "on the mouth⁸." In a great dissention which then arose among the people, he was in danger of "being pulled in pieces of them;" and was only delivered by the Roman soldiers, who at the command of the chief captain, fearful lest such should have been the event, "went down, and took him by force from among them, and brought him into the castle⁹." Hereupon "certain of the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, (they were more than forty which had made this conspiracy,) that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul¹⁰." Nor was he saved from this imminent danger, but by a contrivance of the Roman commander^c, which was followed by his imprisonment at Cæsarea for two years^d; then by a plot of the high priest and chief of the Jews, who lay wait in the way to kill him on his expected return to Jerusalem^e; then by his voyage to Italy in

⁷ Acts xxii. 24, &c.⁸ Acts xxiii. 2.⁹ Acts

xxiii. 10.

¹⁰ Acts xxiii. 12.^c Acts xxiii. 23, &c.^d Acts xxiv. 27.^e Acts xxv. 2, 3.

a dangerous season and in tempestuous weather, which caused him to be "driven up and down" in the Mediterranean for fourteen days, and so to be shipwrecked on the isle of Malta^f, and to be detained there for three months^g; and lastly by his further confinement for two years more at Rome^h.

These sufferings of our Apostle are recorded by St. Luke in his narrative in the Acts. But it is evident that these were far from being all his sufferingsⁱ. In his first Epistle to the Corinthians the Apostle himself speaks of his having "fought with beasts at Ephesus;" alluding in all probability to his having been compelled, on some occasion of persecution, to combat with wild beasts in the Ephesian theatre^k. And in his second Epistle to the same church, he makes a most affecting allusion to the dangers and sufferings which he had previously encountered, when, speaking of certain false apostles who had endeavoured to blast his reputation and to rival him in his ministerial career, he says, "Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more: in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the

^f Acts xxvii. ^g Acts xxviii. 11. ^h Acts xxviii. 30.

ⁱ Dr. Lardner.

^k 1 Cor. xv. 32.

Jews five times received I forty stripes, save one : thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep ; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren ; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness¹." Some of these sufferings are recorded by St. Luke in his history : but of others of them he has given no account : so that besides the particulars, of which he informs us, and not to dwell upon those afflictions of which St. Paul himself in this most feeling recital speaks only in general terms, he must, at the time of his writing this Epistle, have been several times imprisoned, five times scourged by the Jews, twice beaten with rods by the Romans, and thrice have suffered shipwreck ; for St. Luke has recorded but one instance of his being beaten with rods ; and but one of shipwreck, which was not until after the date of this Epistle, in the Apostle's voyage from Judea to Rome, and which must therefore have been a fourth^m.

¹ 2 Cor. xi. 23, &c.

^m Dr. Lardner.

The period of St. Paul's first imprisonment at Rome concludes the Acts of the Apostles. With respect to the latter part of his life, but little assistance is to be derived from the other books of the New Testament; nor much, that can be depended upon, from other ancient authors. That after his enlargement he travelled into Spain, and even into Britain, has been asserted and maintained by some writers^a; but others have disputed and denied it^b. From his Epistle to the Romans it appears that it certainly was at one time his intention to "take a journey into Spain," proceeding into that country by way of Rome^c. There is no scriptural evidence for affirming that he carried his intention into effect: nor on the other hand is there scriptural evidence for denying it. The earliest and best evidence upon the subject is that of Clement of Rome, the Apostle's contemporary and fellow labourer: who in his famous Epistle to the Corinthians expressly asserts, that Paul, "being a preacher both in the east and west, taught righteousness to the whole world, and went to the utmost bound of the west:" an expression, which, though attempts have been made by some authors to

^a Dr. Cave, Mr. Nelson.

^b Dr. Lardner, Dr. Hales.

^c Rom. xv. 24, 28.

limit it to "Italy or Rome, where Clement was, and where Paul suffered¹," have been judged by others more properly to point to Spain or Britain, which before that period had become known and was designated, as the most westerly region of the earth. And according to this view, Irenæus and Tertullian, in the second and third centuries, record the conversion of Britain, together with that of Spain and the other Celtic or western nations, as the work of the Apostles and their disciples, but without any express mention of St. Paul: and in the fourth century Eusebius and Jerome, and in the fifth Theodoret, speak expressly of the British islands, as having been illuminated with the light of the Gospel by this Apostle².

From this journey to the West, or if this journey to the West be not admitted, then immediately from Rome or Italy, he sailed to Judea; where he visited the churches to which he had lately sent the Epistle now inscribed to the Hebrews; and thence travelled through Asia Minor, Crete, Macedonia, and Greece, confirming his converts, and regulating the affairs of the different churches which he had planted in those countries. It was the general tradition of ecclesiastical antiquity that even-

¹ Dr. Lardner.

² Dr. Cave.

tually he returned to Rome, probably considering that city as the most proper place for his future residence, as being the place of the greatest celebrity and the most universal resort, and therefore affording the most useful theatre for his exertions*. Here however a second imprisonment soon awaited him, the probable consequence of his activity in preaching the Gospel; and, in a short time after, the sentence of death. We learn from the Roman historians, Tacitus and Suetonius, that a dreadful fire happened at Rome in the reign of Nero, and continued for six or seven days. By many persons it was thought that the emperor himself was the author of the conflagration: but, however that may have been, to remove the allegation from himself, Nero threw it upon the Christians, and caused them to undergo the most-cruel persecution. In this persecution both St. Peter and St. Paul suffered martyrdom, probably in the year 65 of the Christian era: the former on the cross, the latter by the sword. The instrument of his execution seems to have been determined by the circumstance of his being a Roman citizen, and thus exempt from the servile punishment of crucifixion†; and it has given occasion for

* Dr. Lardner.

† Dr. Hales.

the Apostle to be represented in pictures and images with a sword in his right hand^u. The cause of his execution may be sufficiently found in the general persecution against the Christians: but it has been moreover affirmed that he drew upon himself the particular indignation of Nero by having converted a female favourite of the Emperor's, or, as St. Chrysostom says, the Emperor's cup-bearer, to the Christian faith*. According to primitive tradition he was beheaded at Aquæ Salvæ, three miles from Rome, and interred in the Via Ostiensis at a place two miles from the city, where Constantine the Great built a church to his memory, which was afterwards rebuilt upon a larger scale by the emperors Valentinian and Theodosius the Great, and further beautified by Placidia the empress, the daughter of the latter. "But his noblest monument," as Dr. Hales has well observed, "subsists in his immortal writings; which, the more they are studied, and the better they are understood, the more they will be admired to the latest posterity, for the most sublime and beautiful, the most pathetick and impressive, the most learned and profound specimens of Christian piety, oratory, and philosophy."

^u Dr. Nicholls.

^{*} Dr. Hales.

REFLEXIONS.

THE history of St. Paul's conversion, and of the important consequences which flowed from it, would give occasion to numerous profitable reflexions. But the biographical notice, which has engaged our attention, has been carried of necessity to such an extent, as to preclude a detailed application. Still, in pursuance of our general plan, a few reflexions shall be offered, for the purpose of shewing in what manner the history may be most properly and usefully applied.

First then, although we are not "chosen vessels" as he was, "to bear the name of the Lord Jesus Christ before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel;" yet are we chosen to a profession of the same Gospel that he was, and are thereby put into a capacity of attaining everlasting salvation, to which we may eventually be advanced, by following the example of this holy Apostle; by "keeping under our bodies, and bringing them into subjection, lest that we be castaways;" and by "pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, if that by any means we may attain unto the resurrection of the dead." That, which St. Paul said to the Ephesians, is true with respect to all Christians, that "God hath

chosen us in Christ, to the end that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." To holiness in this life we, as well as the Apostle, are unequivocally called; and a sufficient measure of the grace of Christ is given to us, as it was to him, to enable us to comply with the call. Be it our study to comply with it; anticipating the result of that day, when we shall find that to be verified in fact, of which God hath graciously forewarned us by his Apostle, that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord."

Again: although we have no reason to expect such supernatural and extraordinary communications as were vouchsafed to him, who was a vessel specially chosen for signal purposes by the Lord, yet are we blessed with all degree of illumination suited to our actual condition. By means of the inspired writers, and amongst others by means of this Apostle, who was chosen for the purpose of "bearing the Lord's name before the Gentiles," we are admitted to a knowledge of the divine mercy in Christ Jesus, and of our duty consequent thereupon; and we are required to exercise our talents "according to the measure of the gift of Christ." Instead then of flattering ourselves with the delusive hope of miraculous revelations, let us profit by the revelation of God's will

clearly laid before us in the holy Scriptures, "which are able to make us wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." The abundance of the revelations vouchsafed to the Apostle was in proportion to the particular purpose for which he was chosen. Sufficient for the purpose, for which we are chosen, are the revelations which we enjoy. Gifted and commissioned as he was, "a necessity was laid upon him; and woe would have been unto him, if he had not preached the Gospel:" a necessity, corresponding with our measure of grace, is laid upon us; and woe will be unto us, if we do not believe and obey it.

Once more: although we have no reason to expect those powerful and miraculous appeals which were made to the Apostle, and therefore are not encouraged to expect such rapid conversions as his, nor indeed in common instances any special conversion, according to the modern and fanatical acceptation of the term; yet ought we to encourage both in ourselves and in others, through the preventing and assisting grace of God's Holy Spirit, that rational, sincere, practical repentance which the Scriptures inculcate, accompanied with continual mortification of our corrupt affections, and continual improvement in holiness and growth in grace. His conversion, under the influence of that Holy

Spirit which is always to be understood, his conversion was the combined effort of reason and of feeling. The miracle, which he witnessed, convinced his understanding, that the religion, which he had endeavoured to suppress, was of divine origin, and that Jesus, whom he had persecuted, was the Lord. Feelings of a suitable character followed: and he became a humble, contrite, and devout penitent. In these respects again a similar course lies open before us. Evidences to the truth of Christianity, sufficient to satisfy our minds as reasonable inquirers into its origin; evidences of our own passions and infirmities, sufficient to satisfy us that we are in a greater or less degree offenders against God; are placed before us: if we look into these subjects, with minds devoted to serious reflexion and open to conviction, we shall hardly fail of having our reason convinced and our hearts affected, as was the case with St. Paul. And doubtless it is our interest, as it is our duty, whether by an intire conversion of our ways, if former habits of abandoned impiety and depravity have rendered such conversion necessary; or by partial changes of sentiment and conduct, if such changes alone are requisite; at all events by a conscientious adaptation of our lives to the rules of the Gospel; to copy the amendment of the Apostle.

"Brethren," saith he to the Philippians, "be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. For our conversation is in heaven: from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."

On the whole, in reflecting on the wonderful event commemorated in this day's festival, let our thoughts be turned on the one hand to a grateful sense of the grace of God, which brought St. Paul to a knowledge of the Gospel, and enabled him, putting him into the ministry, to be so faithful and successful in preaching it; and, on the other hand, to an admiration, in order to an imitation, of the bright pattern of Christian virtue, which was portrayed in the subsequent conduct of the holy Apostle; his implicit acquiescence in the will of the Lord, his obedience to God's commandments, and his performance of the appointed means of grace; his gratitude and devotion; his charity and brotherly love; his self-condemnation, his humility, his unweariedness in labours, his fearlessness of danger, his endurance of suffering, his contentedness under privations, his temperance in all things, his self-exercise, and self-com-

mand. Let us fail not to study the picture of his mind, as delineated in his history and in his writings: let us examine the particulars of these and of his other virtues; let us ponder them in our meditations; let us imitate them in our practice; and withal let us "follow the holy doctrine which he taught;" and his conversion will have in us its perfect work. So having followed him, as he followed Christ, during the season of trial, we may be qualified to welcome the close of it with his triumphant exclamation, uttered not in the vanity of self-righteousness, but in devout reliance on the merits and mediation of the Saviour, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me in that day."

Collects.

"O God, who through the preaching of the blessed Apostle St. Paul hast caused the light of the Gospel to shine throughout the world: Grant, we beseech thee, that we having his wonderful conversion in remembrance, may shew forth our thankfulness unto thee for the same, by following the holy doctrine which he taught; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen."

“O MERCIFUL God, who hast made all men, and hatest nothing that thou hast made, nor wouldest the death of a sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live: Have mercy upon all Jews, Turks, Infidels, and Hereticks, and take from them all ignorance, hardness of heart, and contempt of thy word; and so fetch them home, blessed Lord, to thy flock, that they may be saved among the remnant of the true Israelites, and be made one fold under one Shepherd, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. *Amen*.”

“ALMIGHTY God, who shewest to them that be in error the light of thy truth, to the intent that they may return into the way of righteousness; Grant unto all them that are admitted into the truth of Christ’s religion, that they may eschew those things that are contrary to their profession, and follow all such things as are agreeable to the same; through our Lord Jesus Christ. *Amen*.”

Third Collect for Good Friday. * Collect for the third Sunday after Easter.

BEHOLD yon horseman hurrying by,
With armed hand, and ruthless eye!
Damascus-bound, he dooms to die,
Or deep in dungeon gloom to lie,
Or feel th' apostate's shame,
Whoe'er the stamp of Jesus wears:
Nor sex nor innocence he spares,
Nor beardless cheek, nor hoary hairs,
All-reckless if his victim bears
The Galilean's name.
Mark well the man! 'tis SAUL, 'tis he,
Jew fierce as e'er ye saw;
Of straitest sect a Pharisee,
A slave to Moses' law.

Behold yon preacher patient stand,
With placid mien and aspect bland!
Persuasive, lo! he waves his hand,
And tells of toils by sea and land,
Of dangers and of loss;
His limbs by bonds and scourges torn,
With weariness and watchings worn,
The Gentiles jest, the Hebrews scorn,
Assaulted, trampled on, forlorn,
Yet all for Jesus gladly borne,
The triumph of the Cross!
Mark well again: 'tis SAUL, 'tis he,
From legal bondage freed:
Strong in the Christian's liberty,
True to the Christian's creed.

List to his tale! ye hear him say,
What vision met him on his way:

How from the heavens a piercing ray,
More brilliant than the orb of day,
Struck on his dazzled eye ;
And how, when smitten to the ground,
His ear received th' accusing sound,
" Me wherefore does thy fury wound?
Hard task and painful hast thou found,
Thy Saviour, Saul, am I."
Appall'd, to guide his footsteps blind
He seeks another's sight:
But on the darkness of his mind
Has dawn'd a holier light.

PAUL, on thy truth's unshaken base
Our faith's foundation firm we place ;
Nor less with adoration trace
The riches of celestial grace
In thy conversion shewn.
And though no change like thine we seek,
Nor hope to hear our Saviour speak,
Nor hope to see his glory break
Through opening clouds ; with spirit meek
His ceaseless grace we own :
And lowly beg, that, when away
From his straight path we roam,
His grace may meet us as we stray,
And lead the wanderers home.

ST. MATTHIAS.

The lot fell upon Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven Apostles. Acts i. 26.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE OF ST. MATTHIAS.

THERE is no express mention made in holy Scripture of Matthias, the Saint of this day, except in the account of his election to fill up the vacancy in the number of the Apostles, caused by the apostasy of Judas Iscariot. It is probable however that he was one of our Lord's seventy disciples : it is certain that he had attended on our Lord during his publick ministry, being all the time from the baptism of John a constant companion of the Apostles ; and a witness finally of our Lord's resurrection, and of the subsequent transactions until the time of his being taken up into heaven^a.

It is upon the occasion just alluded to, that Matthias is first introduced by name to our

^a Acts i. 21, 22.

notice. Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve Apostles, who were originally called by our Lord himself to that station; chosen like the others from the company of the disciples at large, and equally commissioned and empowered with the others to preach and to work miracles; being "numbered with them, and having obtained part of their ministry;" nevertheless betrayed his Master to the Jews, and received "the reward of his iniquity," first in the thirty pieces of silver, for which he had covenanted to betray him; and then in a premature, a violent, and unnatural death; for smitten by conscience for having "betrayed the innocent blood," he "departed and went and hanged himself," and "falling headlong he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out^b."

Thereupon, at the instance of St. Peter, and in accordance with the prophetic language cited by him from the 109th Psalm, it was determined by the rest of the Apostles, assembled with certain others of the disciples, to supply the vacancy which had been thus caused in their company. Two candidates were appointed, qualified by having been companions of the Apostles during the life of Jesus, and

^b Matt. xxvii. 3—5. Acts i. 18.

witnesses with them of his resurrection: "Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus; and Matthias," distinguished in the history by no more than his simple appellation. Prayer was offered to the "Lord, which knoweth the hearts of all men, to shew whether of the two he had chosen." The choice was left to the Lord's decision by the direction of lots. "They gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven Apostles."

Matthias, being thus admitted to the Apostleship, became soon after partaker with his brethren of the miraculous effusion of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, and of its stupendous effects; and, in process of time, partaker also of their labours, travels, and sufferings, for the name of Jesus, and in the propagation of the Gospel. All his subsequent history however is involved in obscurity. That he spent the first-fruits of his ministry in Judea with much success, is hardly to be doubted: but it is very uncertain, whether he afterwards travelled into Macedonia, or Ethiopia; and, if the latter, whether the Asiatick or the African Ethiopia; or whether his labours were not rather bestowed on Cappadocia, his residence being principally, according to Jerome, near the irruption of the river Apsarus, and the

haven of Hyssus, on the Euxine sea. There is no more certainty as to the manner or time of his death, though by general consent he appears to have obtained the crown of martyrdom. An ancient Martyrology reports him to have been seized by the Jews, and, as a blasphemer, to have been first stoned and then beheaded. But the Greek offices, seconded herein by several ancient breviaries, tell us that he was crucified; and that, as Judas was hanged upon a tree, so Matthias suffered upon a cross^c. His death is supposed to have happened about the 61st or 64th year of the Christian era: and his memory is celebrated in the Greek Church on the 9th of August, whereas the Western Churches, and ours among the number, commemorate him on the 24th of February. A gospel according to St. Matthias is mentioned by Eusebius; but it is mentioned only to be condemned as altogether spurious, an heretical forgery, universally rejected by Catholick Christians^d.

REFLEXIONS

ON THE FALL OF JUDAS.

FROM this brief sketch it is apparent, that the personal character and conduct of St. Matthias

^c Dr. Cave.

^d Dr. Lardner.

will afford but small scope for reflexion. Not so the conduct of those, who were concerned in his elevation to the Apostolate: of Judas, who caused the vacancy, which led to his elevation; and of the other Apostles, who were instrumental in effecting it.

First, from the treachery of Judas we may learn that spiritual gifts do not confer an exemption from the commission or the punishment of sin. Judas was sent forth by our Lord in common with the rest of the twelve Apostles to "preach the kingdom of God:" and in common with them he received "power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease^e." Thus he was endowed with singular gifts of the Holy Ghost. Yet into the same Judas, being as he was "one of the twelve, Satan entered;" and he was filled so full of iniquity, that our Lord himself called him "a devil^f." His fall is recorded as an awful warning for us to "take heed lest we fall" also; to "watch and pray that we enter not into temptation;" and to estimate our condition, less by our supposed spiritual endowments, than by the conformity of our hearts and lives to the commandments of God. What privileges can be a sufficient

^e Luke ix. 2. Matt. x. 1.

^f John vi. 70.

safeguard against the commission of sin, when the miracles, the discourses, the immediate presence, the familiar conversation of Christ himself could not secure one of his very Apostles from so fatal an apostasy? And be we well assured, that whatever be the privileges which we possess, if we employ them not with fidelity to him who gave them, but act towards him as traitors, they will be no safeguard to us against punishment. He, who follows the false Apostle in his treachery, must be prepared to follow him likewise here or hereafter in his fate.

Again, from the case of Judas we may perceive, that the wickedness of those, who are intrusted with the ministry of the Gospel, is no fit argument against "using their ministry in hearing the word of God, and in the receiving of the sacraments:" which derive their effect, not from the personal qualifications of the ministers, but "from Christ's promise and institution^g," and from the grace of Him, in whose name and by whose commission they minister. Judas having received, in common with the other Apostles, his commission and his power from Christ, together with them "departed, and went through the towns, preaching the Gospel, and healing every where^h." It were

^g Twenty-sixth Article.

^h Luke ix. 6.

injurious to Christ himself to suppose, that the ministry of this Apostle, unworthy as he afterwards proved himself, was less efficacious than that of his brethren in the Apostleship, wherever the seed of the Gospel was sown by him "in an honest and good heartⁱ." Nor can we without injury to Christ suppose, that his grace will now be withheld from the due ministration of his own appointed means of grace, however unworthy may sometimes be the instruments who bear his commission to dispense them, provided they be worthily received. The case is excellently ruled by our Church in her 26th Article, "of the unworthiness of the ministers, which hinders not the effect of the sacrament." Nor can a stronger example, or more apposite to the case, be adduced, than this of the traitor, who was "numbered with the other Apostles, and obtained part of their ministry^k."

Again, from the comment of St. Peter on the fate of Judas, that "this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus," we perceive that both his guilt and his punishment had been foreseen and foretold by

ⁱ Luke viii. 15.

^k Acts i. 17.

God. But we shall greatly err, if we therefore suppose that Judas acted under a decree of the Almighty, compelling him to sin. God knows, and must know, every thing, which will at any time come to pass : to imagine otherwise were to deny his Omniscience. Nay more ; he employs the wickedness of men for the furtherance of his own righteous purposes : and this he does in the exercise of his providential wisdom and almighty power. But he does not, by his foreknowledge that men will sin, lay them under a necessity of sinning ; nor does he cause them to sin, in order that his purposes may thereby be accomplished : to suppose that he does so is at variance with his mercy, his goodness, his holiness, his justice, and his truth : The fate of Judas did not come to pass, because the Holy Spirit foreknew and foretold it : but the Holy Spirit foreknew and foretold it, because through the uncontrolled agency of Judas it was about to come to pass. The evil disposition of Judas was not wrought for the completion of God's purposes ; but God's purposes were completed by means of that evil disposition which was the result of the transgressor's choice. The case falls within the limit of St. James's doctrine, and thither it is best referred for its solution, " Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God ;

for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man. But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death¹.”

The peculiar lust, the prevailing appetite, which drew away and enticed Judas, was the lust of money. He ran greedily after iniquity “for reward.” His history never ceases to admonish us of the truth of St. Paul’s position, “they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some have coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows^m.” and his fall loudly proclaims to us by example, what our blessed Lord impresses upon us by his words, “Take heed, and beware of covetousnessⁿ.”

This lust of his, when it had conceived, “brought forth sin:” the sin of betraying his Lord and Master, and delivering him into the hands of wicked men, and causing him to suffer death upon the cross: a sin, which has been well characterised as one of the most

¹ James i. 13—15. ^m 1 Tim. vi. 10. ⁿ Luke xii. 15.

daring impiety, and to which no parallel can be found in the annals of the world°."

And his "sin, being finished, brought forth death:" an unnatural, a graceless, a horrible, a portentous death; a death of that sort, of which there are only two other instances recorded in holy Scripture; namely, those of Saul and Ahithophel; the disobedient and reprobate prince, the profane and rebellious subject. To these is to be added that of the traitorous Apostle, who, "when he saw that Jesus was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood.* * * And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself." Thus awakened to an intolerable consciousness of his guilt, and actuated by "the sorrow of the world which worketh death," he sought not refuge in, he closed the door against, that "godly sorrow," which "worketh repentance unto salvation, not to be repented of^p;" that, as St. Peter and his brethren emphatically and mysteriously express themselves, "he might go to his own place." How different was the conduct of this infa-

° Dr. Cave.

^p 2 Cor. vii. 10.

tuated man from that of Peter, who, having denied his Lord, yet filled with deep and sincere contrition for his offence, "when he thought thereon, wept bitterly;" and endeavoured afterwards to compensate for his fault by increased fidelity and unshaken attachment to his Lord! Had such been the conduct of Judas, how different a place would have awaited him! For, as St. Chrysostom has piously observed, so we venture humbly to suppose, that "Judas might have repented and been forgiven, if he had not hastily made away with himself through the excess of his grief¹." And, in the forcible language of our good Bishop Latimer, "Christ shed as much blood for Judas, as he did for Peter: Peter believed it, and therefore he was saved; Judas would not believe it, and therefore he was condemned, the fault being in him only, and in nobody else."

REFLEXIONS

ON THE ELECTION OF ST. MATTHIAS.

FROM the melancholy contemplation of the fall of the traitor Judas, we turn to more pleasing reflexions on the choice of Matthias, the faithful servant of God, to be of the number of the twelve Apostles.

¹ Quoted by Dr. Lardner, v. 156.

The conduct of the Apostolical body on this occasion was regulated by a spirit of disinterested and cheerful acquiescence in the divine will; of impartiality and moderation, of prudence and discretion, of devotion and true piety.

It might have occurred to them perhaps that they themselves, having been expressly named and commissioned by their Lord to "preach the Gospel to every creature," and to admit those who should receive their teaching into the Church the avenue of salvation, were sufficient for the discharge of their commission, without imparting to another an equal share of their dignity and power. But it was suggested to the minds of the rest by one of the body, that the appointment of another in the place of Judas was agreeable to an ancient prophecy, which intimated the will of the Holy Spirit in that behalf: the rest without scruple or hesitation adopted the suggestion: and thus they determined to raise an individual of inferior rank and comparative obscurity to their own station of preeminence and distinction; diminishing thereby their own rightful influence and authority in proportion as they magnified his.

In the choice of the person to be thus elevated, they acted with admirable discretion and

sobriety of mind. Personal knowledge of the events, which were to form the basis of the Apostles' preaching, particularly of that great event, the corner stone of the Christian faith, the resurrection of their crucified Master; and a tried attachment to the faith; were obviously the qualifications, humanly speaking, most requisite for the person, who should in future take part in their ministry and apostleship: and such qualifications they accordingly required. Thus they shewed themselves superior to every suspicion of enthusiasm, of indiscretion, or of private predilection in the appointment of the person, who was to be adopted into their number: looking with a single eye to the great purpose of the appointment, and to the best mode of accomplishing the end.

Still they modestly forbore to take it upon themselves to decide absolutely on the choice of the individual, who should be ultimately ranked amongst them. They regarded the case as one, which demanded the divine interposition. And since the Holy Spirit had not yet been poured forth to guide them, as in cases of difficulty they were afterwards guided, by his immediate inspiration, they referred the matter to the decision of the Lord by prayer: and having appointed two of the disciples, possessed of the requisite qualifications, as can-

didates for the vacant Apostleship, they called upon Him "who knoweth the hearts of all men, to shew whether of the two he had chosen." The way of election was by lots: "a way, frequently used both by Jews and Gentiles for the determination of doubtful and difficult cases, and especially the choosing of judges and magistrates; and this way was here taken, says one of the ancients, on purpose to comply with the old custom observed among the Jews, that in the election of an Apostle they might not seem to depart from the way that had been used under the legal state^r." However this may be, and whatever consideration may have guided their determination, the particular mode of proceeding was prompted by the peculiar circumstances of the case, and is not to be drawn into a precedent for us. But the principles, from which that proceeding issued, are both honourable to the Apostles, and worthy of our adoption. It was suggested by a calm and deliberate purpose to meet the exigencies of the case with propriety and effect; by an absence of all fanatical or partial feeling; by a firm confidence in the providential superintendence of that divine Person, whom they venerated as the Author of their religion; and

^r Dr. Cave.

by a devout and implicit submission to his directing will. It were well that these principles should at all times occupy the minds and actuate the conduct of all Christians, whether Governours of the Church, or people; both in the ordinary transactions of life, and more especially in "faithfully and wisely making choice of fit persons to serve in the sacred ministry of Christ's Church^s." The casting of the lots was peculiar to the then condition of the Apostles: the prevailing spirit, which animated them, is suited to us all.

A few words must be added with reference to the special object of their worship, to whom the Apostles addressed themselves, when they prayed and said, "Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen, that he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell." That object appears to have been no other than our blessed Saviour and Redeemer. In the speech of Peter immediately preceding, he had been distinctly named as "the Lord Jesus;" and here therefore he is fitly addressed by the same appellation, "Thou, Lord." To him, in common with the Father, the attribute of omniscience be-

^s First Collect for the Ember Weeks.

longs: for of him the beloved disciple pronounced, that "he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man, for he knew what was in man"; to him St. Peter had previously declared, "Lord, thou knowest all things"; and he has expressly assumed the attribute to himself, "I am he which searcheth the hearts and reins^x:" to him therefore the attribute is here properly ascribed, "Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men." By the Lord Jesus Judas, as well as all the other twelve, had been "chosen" to the Apostleship^y: to the Lord Jesus therefore prayer is by analogy properly addressed, that he would "shew whom he had chosen," to be the successor of the transgressor, and the future associate of the others in their ministry and apostleship. It was "the Lord Jesus," by whom St. Paul was "chosen" to engage in the same ministry^z: and it was the Lord Jesus, the peculiar object of the Christian's faith, to whom Paul and Barnabas commended those engaged in the inferior ministry, when "having ordained them elders in every church, and having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord on whom they believed^a:" the same Lord Jesus therefore

^y John ii. 25. ^x John xxi. 17. ^z Rev. i. 23. ^a John xv. 16. vi. 70. ^b Acts ix. 15, 17. ^c Acts xiv. 23.

may be well deemed on this occasion to have been the object of the Apostles' prayer. Thus we find the Apostles, who had united in "worshipping^a" their Saviour on his being parted from them and being carried up into heaven, upon this the first occasion, whereon their ensuing acts are particularly described, again united in addressing to him divine worship; calling upon him with the utmost solemnity, on an occasion the most important, and in terms which acknowledge him as the supreme Governour of the Church, and distinctly "attribute to him the knowledge of all hearts, which is the property of God alone^b." The examples of individual Apostles and primitive martyrs of the Church are strong to the same effect: but here we have the collective example of the whole Apostolical body, warranting us to offer prayer and supplication to the Lord Jesus, in the unity of the divine nature, as to Him, "which knoweth the hearts of all men," our Lord and our God.

Thus elected to his office, St. Matthias, no doubt, discharged the functions of it with faithfulness, although the records of the Church supply us with little information upon the subject. Upon his personal character and actions

^a Luke xxiv. 52.

^b Dr. Whitby.

therefore no reflexions shall be suggested. But something may be remarked briefly upon his office, distinguished as it is in the narrative of his election, by the two terms of "Apostleship" and "Bishoprick".

The term "Apostle" denotes a person sent forth with peculiar powers to preach the Gospel and establish the Church of Christ: the term "Bishop" denotes an overseer or superintendant of the Church; for such is the meaning of the Greek word "episcopos," which has been transferred under different forms into the different languages of modern Europe: as for example, into our own, when we speak of the Bishop, softened from the Saxon *biscop*, as the governour of the Church, and of the *episcopal* form of Church government.

The eleven, into whose number Matthias was elected, and to whom St. Paul was afterwards added, united in themselves the offices of "Apostle," and of "Bishop." Of these offices, that of the Apostle was to cease with the persons, who were originally appointed to it by divine authority for a temporary purpose. Not so the office of the Bishop. By those who originally held it, this office was conferred on others, such as Timothy, Bishop of Ephesus;

^c Acts i. 20, 25.

Titus, Bishop of Crete; Linus, and after him Clement, of Rome; Epaphroditus, of Philippi; Dionysius the Areopagite, of Athens: in order that by these again it might be transmitted in due succession to others likewise for the perpetual government, order, and benefit of the church^d. Eusebius, in his ecclesiastical history, written at the close of the fourth or the commencement of the fifth century, has recorded such exact and authentick catalogues of the Bishops, who presided in all the principal cities of the Roman empire from the Apostles down to his own time; that it is as impossible for an impartial man, who shall compare this historian with the rest of the primitive fathers, to doubt whether there was a succession of Bishops from the Apostles, as it would be to call in question the succession of Roman Emperors from Julius Cæsar, or the succession of Kings in any other country. And this succession was continually maintained in the universal Church, and the government of the Church was exclusively administered by Bishops, till above fifteen hundred years after its establishment, when a new form of polity was introduced by speculative men, adapting the principles of a republican government in

^d Archbishop Potter on Church Government. 1011 20

civil affairs to the administration of the affairs of religion, to the infinite division and injury of the body of Christ.

Together with the name however, the members of the united Church of England and Ireland, in common with all duly constituted portions of the Church of Christ, have the happiness to possess the episcopal form of Church government. Derived from the primitive times of apostolical superintendence, and transmitted in unbroken succession through all the subsequent ages of the Church, the episcopal office gives a high value to the Church established by the good Providence of God in England and Ireland: a value, altogether distinct from any privilege which it enjoys as sanctioned by the laws of the land; a value, participated by every other legitimate church, although the laws of the land may not give countenance to it, or may even give countenance in preference to a less primitive form. A Church, modelled after the platform of that which was constituted by the Apostles, acting as the immediate representatives and with the full authority of their Lord and Master, should seem to be intitled to preference over every other form, which mere human ingenuity can suggest: such a Church should at least seem entitled to be considered as not deficient in any thing essential to spiri-

tual edification and salvation, so far as the form of ecclesiastical polity is concerned. And although we will not presume to say, that grace may not be conveyed, or that salvation may not be obtained, under another form of polity and from the services of an irregular ministry; yet thus much may safely, and, we trust, inoffensively be said, that under the episcopal form, regularly transmitted by succession from the Apostles, together with "the Apostles' doctrine," is to be found "the Apostles' fellowship;" that there, if any where, may confidently be expected the sanctifying influences of the Comforter; that there, if any where, may be enjoyed the perpetual presence of the divine Founder of the Church.

With respect to others then, whom their peculiar circumstances may preclude from partaking in the advantages of an episcopal church, we make no reflexion: but with respect to ourselves, who live in a country where this primitive and apostolical form is happily established, we remark that it is our interest and our duty to continue stedfastly in the communion of such a church; to appreciate duly the character of her rulers, to submit to their authority, and to profit by their ministry; grateful

to God for the blessing which he has bountifully bestowed upon us, and praying to him that our pastors may never cease to be faithful in their ministry, as the Church instructs and directs us in the Collect for this day.

Collects.

“O ALMIGHTY God, who into the place of the traitor Judas didst choose thy faithful servant Matthias to be of the number of the twelve Apostles; Grant that thy Church, being always preserved from false apostles, may be ordered and guided by faithful and true pastors; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*”

“^eALMIGHTY God, the giver of all good gifts, who of thy divine providence hast appointed divers orders of ministers in thy Church: Give thy grace, we humbly beseech thee, to all those who are called to any office and administration in the same; and so replenish them with the truth of thy doctrine, and endue them with innocency of life, that they may faithfully serve before thee, to the glory of thy great name, and the benefit of thy holy Church; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*”

“^fO God, who knowest us to be set in the midst of so many and great dangers, that by

^e Second Collect for the Ember weeks.

^f Collect for the fourth Sunday after the Epiphany.

was numbered with the eleven Apostles. 199

reason of the frailty of our nature we cannot always stand upright ; Grant to us such strength and protection, as may support us in all dangers, and carry us through all temptations ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*”

BLot from the sacred book the page,
Erase the dread record,
Which points to each succeeding age
The traitor of his Lord !

That Lord so gracious and benign,
Image of God above,
So full his words of truth divine,
His deeds so full of love !

To be the object of his choice,
To tend him day by day,
To see his life, to hear his voice ;
To kiss him, and betray !

O, blot it out, the fearful page,
Erase the dread record ;
Nor point to each succeeding age
The traitor of his Lord !



Forgive the thought ! For not in vain
That page recording tells,
How deeply fix'd the guilty stain
In Adam's offspring dwells.

It tells, how rankling deep within
Breaks forth the deadly taint ;
How foul the character of sin ;
How sure its punishment !

Then let it stand ; for so decreed
The Spirit of the Lord,
That all of Adam's race may read
And mark the dread record ;

May still the traitor's awful fate
With pitying thoughts deplore ;
And scan their own uncertain state,
And tremble, and adore !

ANNUNCIATION.

Mary the mother of Jesus. Acts i. 14.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE OF THE VIRGIN MARY.

SOME churches keep four holydays at least in memory of the blessed Virgin: namely, her Nativity, her Annunciation, her Purification, and her Assumption or taking up into heaven^a. Of the first of these events we have no certain or probable information; none in any author of credit, nor in such a form as to be intitled to serious consideration. Still less is any credible information to be expected concerning the last, which, instead of being a real event, is rather to be regarded as a legendary and superstitious tale, feigned no doubt in imitation of the evangelical narrative of our Lord's ascension, and calculated to exalt the blessed Virgin into a condition of rivalry with her Son; but having

^a Mr. Wheatley.

no foundation whatever in historical truth, and dressed out with a display of circumstances, distinguished by monstrous impiety, and worse than childish folly.

The other two events are recorded in holy writ, and are commemorated by our Church in the series of her annual services. But though the festivals have some relation to the blessed Virgin, they more peculiarly belong to our Saviour. The Annunciation has a peculiar respect to his Incarnation, which was at that time made "known by the message of an angel." The Purification is principally observed in memory of his being, as on that day, "presented in the temple in substance of our flesh:" and so the festival, though noticed by the Church as "commonly called the Purification of Saint Mary the Virgin," appears in the judgment of the Church to be more correctly called, "the Presentation of Christ in the temple." The latter of these two festivals would more properly fall under consideration, in the series of events belonging to our Lord's life: the former of the two may be regarded as standing apart from that series, and may be fitly made the occasion for considering the life of the blessed Virgin, or, as she is called by St. Luke, "Mary, the mother of Jesus."

Mary is represented by the general voice of

antiquity as the daughter of Joakim and Anna. Their names are not mentioned in the New Testament; nor is any notice taken of her parents, unless it be of Joakim, under the name of Heli, in the genealogy in the third chapter of St. Luke's Gospel: for the names of Eliakim, which is Eli by abbreviation, and of Joakim, are considered by some learned writers as properly the same name, being derived from the two names of God, which are sometimes interchanged; and this is rendered probable by the Virgin's being called by some Jewish writers, "Mary, the daughter of Eli^b." From Scripture it appears that he was of the royal race of David: but no further information concerning him is to be found, except in apocryphal writings, to which indeed but little credit is due. Concerning the father of Anna it is generally agreed, that he was named Matthan. He is supposed by some to have been a priest: and, as the daughters of the priests might intermarry with any tribe, it accounts for Mary's being the cousin of Elizabeth, who was really of the tribe of Levi, though the father of Mary, Joakim or Eli, was a descendant of the tribe of Judah^c.

According to the Jewish manner, whereby

^b Dr. Hales.

^c Mr. Townsend.

espousals preceded marriage by an interval of several months, Mary had been espoused, but not married, to Joseph: a man in the low condition of a carpenter, but himself likewise "of the house and lineage of David," when she saw a heavenly messenger appearing before her at her dwelling in Nazareth of Galilee, and heard him address her with the salutation, "Hail, thou that art highly favoured: the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women." To remove the anxiety and suspense of mind, natural on so marvellous a salutation, he addressed her in the language of encouragement, bidding her "fear not, for she had found favour with God:" and announced to her that she was chosen by the divine will to be the mother of the future Saviour of mankind, the Son of the Lord, the most high God. At the same time, to satisfy her mind as to the event itself, and as to the manner in which the event should be accomplished, he referred her for its completion to the mysterious and overshadowing energy of the Holy Spirit of God, and gave her assurance in the removal, which had recently been miraculously effected of the barrenness of Elizabeth, that "nothing is impossible with God." Mary thereupon professed herself "the handmaid of the Lord;" prepared to acquiesce in the fulfilment of his will concerning her, and

after the manner which he by his angel had announced ^d.

The faith of Mary was soon afterwards confirmed by a visit to her cousin Elizabeth, the wife of Zacharias, and the future mother of John the Baptist, whose miraculous birth had been six months before revealed to his father by the same angel, who had now announced to Mary her own still more distinguished lot. The blessing which Elizabeth pronounced upon the Virgin Mother of her Lord, and upon that Lord the fruit of the Virgin's womb; the benediction which she uttered upon Mary's faith, and the assurance which she added of the ensuing accomplishment of the Lord's promise; an assurance, to which the experience of what had miraculously befallen herself in the fulfilment of a promise in some degree similar, could not fail to give effect; strengthened no doubt the confidence of Mary, and excited in her the liveliest emotions of holy joy: so that she burst forth into that rapturous effusion of delight, gratitude, humility, and pious adoration, which the Church introduces into her daily evening devotions, as "the Song of the blessed Virgin Mary," known also by the name of the

^d Luke i. 26—38.

“Magnificat,” from the first word with which it commences in the Latin version, “My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour: for he hath regarded the lowliness of his handmaiden. For behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed: for He that is mighty hath magnified me; and holy is his name^e.”

In due time from the period of the Annunciation, the Virgin became a mother. In the interval Joseph had been assured from heaven of his espoused wife’s supernatural conception, and of the destined birth and divine nature of her child^f: and as the time of her delivery drew near, she was conducted by him, under a special disposition of divine Providence, to Bethlehem, the place foretold by the Spirit of God for the birth-place of the Saviour. “And so it was that while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered; and she brought forth her first-born Son^g.”

The glory of the Lord which shone round about the shepherds in the neighbouring fields; the good tidings of great joy proclaimed to them by the Angel of the Lord, on the birth of the “Saviour, which is Christ the Lord;” and

^e Luke i. 39—46. ^f Matt. i. 18—25. ^g Luke ii. 6, 7.

the praises of God chaunted forth by the accompanying "multitude of the heavenly host;" were made known abroad by the shepherds, and doubtless communicated with all their marvellous circumstances to the mother of the child. An universal wonder was the consequence in those who heard them: but "Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart^b," not making them the occasion of ostentation and vain glory on her own part; but secretly meditating upon them, as corresponding with the testimony which she had herself received from the Angel, and anticipating from them the future exaltation of the infant, to whom she had been the humble instrument of giving birth.

After an interval, probably of several months, similar matter was again afforded for devout and grateful meditation in the arrival at Bethlehem of the eastern magi, who had been miraculously led from their own country to Jerusalem, and thence to Bethlehem, where "they found the young child with Mary his mother:" who must have had much more to "ponder in her heart," when she saw these distinguished strangers "fall down before the young child, and worship him; and opening their treasures

^b Luke ii. 19.

present unto him gifts ; gold, and frankincense, and myrrhⁱ.”

It was probably during this interval, certainly at the end of forty days from the birth of the child, that he was taken to Jerusalem to be presented to the Lord, according to the provisions of the law of Moses, as a first-born son : at the same time that his mother offered the legal sacrifice for her own purification. Then the aged Simeon, under the immediate impulse of the Holy Ghost, took the child Jesus in his arms, and blessed God, and welcomed him as the long-expected instrument of God's salvation ; as “ a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel.” Whilst Joseph and his mother marvelled at these prophetick intimations of the high destiny of the child, corroborative as they were of the declarations concerning him previously made known to them from heaven, and corresponding with the miraculous circumstances of his conception and his birth, the holy man addressed himself particularly to Mary the child's mother, apprising her of the consequences which would ensue to Israel on the manifestation of the child, in the ruin of some and the salvation of others ; and of the bitter distress which she should her-

ⁱ Matt. ii. 11.

self feel in the depths of her own soul, on a sight of the opposition and contumely to which he should be exposed, and of that most excruciating agony which in the event should penetrate his^k.

The flight of Joseph with the young child and his mother into Egypt, being the method appointed by God's providence to preserve the young child from the jealous fury of Herod; and his return from thence also with the young child and his mother, by the like appointment, to their own city Nazareth of Galilee; are the last occurrences in which Mary is related to have borne a part during the infancy of the holy Jesus^l. Of these occurrences we possess no circumstantial detail; but doubtless they gave her occasion to feel the first piercing of the "sword," destined afterwards to "pass through" her inmost soul.

During his childhood only one transaction is recorded, in which however his mother bore a memorable part. Joseph and Mary were accustomed to go every year to Jerusalem at the feast of the passover: an instance of piety on the part of Mary; for, although the law required the attendance of the adult males, the attendance of females was not enjoined; but,

^k Luke ii. 22—35.

^l Matt. ii. 13—15, 19—23.

whenever it took place, as indeed not unfrequently it did, it was the voluntary offering of a devout spirit. When Jesus was twelve years old, he accompanied them : but on their return he tarried behind in Jerusalem, where after three days they found him in the temple, listening to the exposition of the law given by the doctors whose business it was to teach it ; and, propounding to them questions on points of difficulty with an intelligence which excited a transport of admiration in all who heard him^m. His mother expostulated with him on his conduct : " Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us ? Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing." But her expostulation was met by a gentle rebuke, directing her thoughts from his reputed father to his true and more exalted parentage, and reminding her of the necessity of his fulfilling the great purposes of his mission. " How is it that ye sought me ? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business, or in the house of my Father ?" The conciseness and comprehensiveness of his words appear to have rendered them obscure to the understandings of those to whom they were addressed. But they satisfied his mother's remonstrance : and, together with the event which

^m Dr. Doddridge.

occasioned them, they supplied her with matter of profound meditation in their retirement at Nazareth, whither they immediately returned, and where he presented an example of filial duty in submission to her and to his reputed fatherⁿ.

From this period until after the commencement of our Lord's ministry, an interval of about eighteen years, we have no information concerning the blessed Virgin. In that interval it is reasonable to suppose that Joseph died: for on the first occasion, on which Mary is subsequently spoken of, she is spoken of alone: nor is mention afterwards made of Joseph in the Gospel history. After the commencement of our Lord's ministry she is occasionally introduced into the narrative; but the occasions are not numerous, nor is the narrative for the most part, in its relation to her, very circumstantial.

At the marriage feast in Cana of Galilee, which was the scene of the "beginning of his miracles," and where he first "manifested forth his glory," "the mother of Jesus was present: and when they wanted wine, she said unto Jesus, they have no wine." Chrysostom says she was moved to this from a consideration of his miraculous conception and birth, of the testimony of the Baptist, and of his own gathering of

ⁿ Luke ii. 41—52.

disciples°. Possibly too she had acquired a knowledge of his miraculous power, either from some previous exercise of it in private, or from some private intimation that he possessed it: and she appears to have thought, that now the seasonable opportunity was arrived for displaying that power, and thus manifesting himself to be the Son of God.

The answer of Jesus is remarkable. "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" or, "what hast thou to do with me? Mine hour is not yet come." The term of address, "Woman," which may have a harsh and disrespectful sound to modern ears, probably conveyed no such sentiment to those, by whom it was heard. In the language of ancient Greece at least, sovereigns used it in addressing themselves to their wives; servants to their mistresses; and subjects to their queens. The question however, "What have I to do with thee," or, "What hast thou to do with me," accompanied by the remark, "Mine hour is not yet come," appears to signify, that it was not her province to interfere with him in the exercise of his divine powers, and that his proper season for exercising them had not yet arrived. Such is the constant purport of this interrogatory phrase

° Dr. Whitby.

in holy Scripture, where it is used in the way of reproof or reprehension ; and accordingly it was the almost universal opinion of the ancient fathers, either openly declared, or obscurely intimated, that she was guilty of some fault or error, if in no other respect, yet in inciting her Son to the performance of the miracle with unseasonable precipitancy^p. Thus it seems reasonable to understand that reproof was intended, although clothed in the language of affection, kindness, and respect^q. His mother readily acquiesced in the reproof ; and, at once admitting his superior authority, instructed the servants to execute whatever he should order^r.

After this miracle Jesus went down to Capernaum, whither his mother accompanied him^s. This seems to be the place where she afterwards chiefly resided. And here it was that on a particular occasion, when he was talking with the people, and appeared by the freedom of his remonstrances to be exposing himself to extraordinary danger, she came with his near kinsmen, and caused it to be notified to him, that “ his mother and his brethren were standing without, and desiring to speak with him : ” an intimation, which drew from him that im-

^p Dr. Whitby.

1—11.

^q Mr. Townsend.

^r John ii. 12.

^s John ii.

pressive declaration, probably intended to check their interference with him in the discharge of his high office, and at the same time to signify in a manner peculiarly endearing his affection to his obedient disciples: "My mother and my brethren are these, which hear the word of God and do it," as St. Luke reports; or, as reported by St. Matthew, "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother[†]."

Epiphanius thinks that our Lord's mother followed him every where during his preaching: but the Evangelists do not mention her, when they speak of the holy women who were his followers and attendants[‡]. The only remaining occasion indeed, on which she is mentioned before the close of the Gospel history, is that where she is represented by St. John, as standing by the cross of Jesus, whereon he was suspended during his last bitter agonies. "Neither her own danger, nor the sadness of the spectacle, nor the reproaches and insults of the people, could restrain her from performing the last sad office of duty and tenderness to her divine Son upon the cross[§]." Nor did the excruciating agonies of body and soul, which

[†] Luke viii. 21. Matt. xii. 46—50.

[‡] Dr. Doddridge.

[§] Dr. Doddridge.

he endured, prevent him from returning her maternal attention with a most affecting testimony of filial regard. "When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son. Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother^y:" thus directing her for future support, in her condition, probably, of widowhood, and of now approaching childlessness, to the filial care of him, who is familiarly known as "the beloved disciple of Jesus;" and thus calling upon that beloved disciple to administer to her, who was with such solemnity bequeathed to his protection, the affectionate regards of a son. The words were few and simple indeed, but full of meaning, easily and equally understood, and obeyed by both: for "from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home;" and assuredly beheld and treated her with all the respect and tenderness due to such a mother so recommended^z.

It was now that a sword, according to the prophecy of Simeon, pierced through the soul of the blessed Virgin, when she saw her son set up as "a sign" or spectacle of publick ignominy; and heard him "spoken against," and blasphemed, and shortly after beheld him pierced to

^y John xix. 26, 27.

^z Dr. Hales.

the heart with a spear. And it has been affectingly surmised, that perhaps the extremity of her sorrows might so overwhelm her spirits, as to render her incapable of attending the sepulchre^a. However this may be, the fact is certain, and is remarkable, that she is not named as attending the sepulchre with the other women, with whom she had attended the cross: nor is she named again in the sacred history, except where it is related by St. Luke, that the apostles, having witnessed our Lord's ascension, "returned to Jerusalem, and abode in an upper room, and there continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren^b."

The early history of the Church gives no account of her. As it is expressly stated that St. John "took her to his own home from the time" of our Lord's crucifixion, so it is highly probable that she continued to reside with him till her death. Whether she died at Jerusalem, before he withdrew from Judea; or accompanied him to Ephesus, and there died in an extreme old age; has been matter of dispute. The most likely supposition is, that she died at Jerusalem, about fifteen years after our Lord's

^a Dr. Doddridge.

^b Acts i. 14.

ascension^c; though we may hesitate about admitting the identity of the place now reputed to be her sepulchre, and exhibited as such, together with those of Anna, Joakim, and Joseph^d. We may well also refrain from dwelling on the legendary tales concerning her, by which fiction has attempted to supply the deficiency of historical truth: indeed, it has been remarked, that of the many ridiculous tales that are forged concerning her death, and her assumption, or being taken up into heaven, the best Popish authors themselves appear heartily ashamed^e.

REFLEXIONS.

FROM this account of the Virgin Mary, we may see reason to regard her as distinguished by many excellent virtues and graces: by faith and piety, and devotion, and obedience; by purity and chastity; by modesty, meekness, and humility; by a spirit of holy meditation in divine things; and by zeal and fortitude, and maternal affection and tenderness: for instances of all these qualities have appeared in the several occurrences in which the holy Scriptures record her to have been engaged.

^c Dr. Cave, Dr. Lardner.

^d Mr. Maundrell,

Bishop Pococke. ^e Dr. Doddridge.

We presume that a foresight of these may have inclined Almighty God to make choice of her for the happy instrument of conveying to mankind the inestimable mercy shewn by our Lord's incarnation^f. We may esteem her, upon both of these accounts, to have been, as the angel saluted her, a person "highly favoured" by God, and "blessed among women;" and we may honour her memory accordingly, and admire her as a bright pattern of human excellence, and make her an object of our imitation.

But her excellence, whatever it be, is only human. It is never proposed to us as a perfect pattern for our imitation: it is never represented as free from the infirmities, to which human nature is subject: still less is it represented as invested with divine attributes. Highly favoured as she was by God, and made the object of his blessing, she was only "blessed among women." When God sent forth his Son, that Son who alone was free from all taint of sin, and chose the blessed Virgin to be the instrument of his incarnation, he caused him to be "made of a woman^g."

And it is much to be remarked, what a plain distinction the sacred writers observe in speak-

^f Dean Stanhope, ^g Gal. iv. 4.

ing of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of her who was his mother in his incarnate state, the Virgin Mary. Of him there are continual indications, which point to his divine as well as to his human nature. Of her there is nothing said, which can warrant the supposition of her possessing a nature more than human. She is first introduced to notice as a "a Virgin, espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the Virgin's name was Mary." Afterwards she is mentioned as "Mary," "Mary the wife of Joseph," "his espoused wife;" "the mother of the young child;" "the mother of Jesus." Of herself she speaks as "the hand-maid of the Lord." By her Son she is addressed with no other compellation but that of "woman." In a word, no mention is made of her but in terms which denote no more than a human character, and evidently have no semblance of any thing of a superior kind.

Again, it is to be observed, both how few are the scenes in which she is related to have been engaged; and how subordinate and inferior a part she performed in the great drama of the Gospel, and with how little deference she appears to have been treated by those who were engaged in the same transactions. The revelation made by the Angel to the shepherds proclaimed the birth of "a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord," but omitted all mention of his

mother: and "they came with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child." When the sages from the east had come "into the house where the young child was, and saw the young child with Mary his mother, they fell down and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts:" of her they are not related to have taken any particular notice. The aged Simeon blessed God for the sight of "the Lord's Christ," that "salvation which God had prepared before the face of all people:" but to his mother he said no more than that which related to the future destiny of the child, and to the sufferings which she should undergo at the sight of his. In the course of the history she is not described as receiving any mark of respect from our Lord's disciples. The scene at the cross represents her in a state of dependence upon her Son, and afterwards upon the beloved disciple of her Son, upon whom it was his pleasure that the future care of her should devolve, but with no intimation of any thing exceeding filial respect and attention. And when after our Lord's ascension she is finally mentioned, where it is said of the Apostles, that they "all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication,"

they are said to have done so “with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.” No peculiar mark of distinction is placed upon her in this enumeration, except that her name is mentioned apart from the other women, a distinction naturally due to her maternal relation : but neither upon this, nor upon any other occasion, is she treated with peculiar deference : she is not appealed to as an authority ; she is not consulted for her advice. She appears in fact as nothing more than one of the ordinary “disciples,” one of the other “women” with whom she is classed. And thenceforth she sinks into obscurity, and her name is totally omitted in the history of the infant Church.

Again, it is also to be remarked, that whilst the Scriptures attribute to the Virgin Mary nothing above the human character, and represent her in the few transactions, in which she is engaged, as treated with no peculiar veneration ; they specify particulars which seem to prove that she was not exempt from the weaknesses and failings of our common nature. In answer to her expostulation in the temple, when Jesus demanded, “How is it that ye sought me ? wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business ?” his inquiry seems to imply a want of discernment and spiritual intelli-

gence in his mother ; or a want of due attention in her to his own divine character. When in answer to her remark at the marriage feast in Cana, he demanded, " Woman, what have I to do with thee ? mine hour is not yet come : " his language seems to intimate on her part an undue interference with his authority, and an undue precipitation in urging him to display his power. And when, on occasion of her desiring to speak with him during his conversation with the people, he said, " My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it," his language seems to convey a tacit censure on the interruption, accompanied by an intimation that there were others who might be intitled to a higher rank in his regard, than those, whoever they might be, who were connected with him by the nearest natural relation : agreeably to the sentiment which he uttered, when in answer to a certain woman of the company who lifted up her voice, and said unto him, " Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked," he said, " Yea, rather blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it^h."

Upon the whole, the Scriptures represent to us the Virgin Mary, as one highly favoured

^h Luke xi. 27, 28.

of God, but as a woman and as a fallible woman: as a creature of the same nature as ourselves, intitled to respect and imitation so far as her conduct was holy and exemplary; but not intitled to be followed with implicit admiration and observance; still less to be treated by us, any more than she was by the first Christians, with more than human respect as is her blessed Son, or to be made partaker of those honours which are peculiarly and exclusively his own.

From these considerations we may perceive the folly and impiety of those, who make the blessed Virgin an object of religious veneration: conferring upon her the appellations of "Queen and Empress of heaven; Queen of the world; Queen of angels and men; the mother of mercy; the fountain of grace and salvation; the only hope of sinners; the health of the weak; the comforter of the afflicted:" investing her with the attributes of holiness, omniscience, and omnipresence, majesty and unlimited power: praying to God for her sake, for her merits, and through her intercession, and thus bestowing upon her the office assigned of right to her incarnate Son, "the one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus¹:"

¹ 1 Tim. ii. 5.

implored her to "shew herself to be a mother, and to exert her influence over that Son," if not to "command him," in their behalf: nay, even praying to herself as to the Deity, "flying to her patronage," "committing to her all their hope and all their comfort," and supplicating her to "loose the bonds of the guilty, to enlighten the eyes of the blind, to free them from all sin, and to drive away from them all evil;" intreating her to "help their frailty and weakness, and assist them day by day in all their calamities, temptations, and dangers;" and "to her blessed trust committing their soul and body night by night and for ever;" "especially and in the hour of death recommending to her merciful charity all their hope and consolation, all their distress and misery, their life and the end of it;" and praying that she would "grant them to escape eternal damnation, and cause the glory of paradise to rest upon them^k." By whatever specious name it may seem good with those who practise such things to denominate their practices, it is plain how utterly they are at variance with the blessed Virgin's actions and character, as described to us in holy writ; and what a charge of folly and impiety they bring upon those who treat her with such veneration.

^k All these passages are taken from accredited Romanist books of devotion.

On the contrary we perceive the wisdom and piety of our own scriptural Church in dismissing from her services all such deviation from the purity of Christian faith and Christian worship, whilst she honours the memory of the Virgin Mary as that of one, whom He that is mighty hath peculiarly magnified, and whom all generations shall call blessed¹. Be it our business then to renounce the former corruptions, and to act upon the Scriptural principles of religious duty as acknowledged by our own Church. Let us honour the memory of the blessed Virgin, and mention her with due respect. Let us celebrate the festivals, in which she is commemorated, as appointed by the Church of which we are members. Let us remember and cultivate her virtues. Let us imitate her example, and thank God for the benefit of it. Let us hear the word of God, and lay it up in our hearts, as she did, and ponder it, and keep it. Let us be ready in all the dispensations of his will to say, as she did, "Behold the handmaid" or the servant "of the Lord, be it unto me according as thou hast said." And then may we trust that we also shall be highly favoured of God, and be admitted to his blessing, and be received by him even as "the

¹ Abp. Secker.

brethren and sisters and the mother" of Christ ; not through her merits or by any power or intercession of hers ; but for the sake, and through the merits and intercession, of our only Mediator and Advocate, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Collects.

"^mWE beseech thee, O Lord, pour thy grace into our hearts ; that as we have known the incarnation of thy Son Jesus Christ by the message of an angel, so by his cross and passion we may be brought unto the glory of his resurrection ; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*"

"ⁿALMIGHTY God, who hast promised to hear the petitions of them that ask in thy Son's name ; we beseech thee mercifully to incline thine ears to us when we make our prayers and supplications unto thee ; and grant that those things, which we faithfully ask according to thy will, may effectually be obtained, to the relief of our necessity, and to the setting forth of thy glory ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*"

"^oWE humbly beseech thee, O Father, mercifully to look upon our infirmities ; and for the glory of thy name turn from us all those evils

^m Collect for the Day.
munion.

ⁿ From the Post-Com-
^o From the Litany.

that we most righteously have deserved ; and grant, that in all our troubles we may put our whole trust and confidence in thy mercy, and evermore serve thee in holiness and pureness of living, to thy honour and glory ; through our only Mediator and Advocate, Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*”

Daughter of DAVID, Maiden meek !
Pledge of thy faith we hear thee speak
The mild submissive word :
“ Behold me ready to fulfil
My great Creator’s holy will,
The handmaid of the Lord.”

Espous’d of JOSEPH, Virgin chaste !
Thine infant on thy bosom plac’d,
Thy Son and Saviour blest,
With care devout we see thee mark
Each wond’rous act, each saying dark,
And store them in thy breast.

Mother of JESUS, Parent dear !
We see thee stand the Sufferer near,
With love more strong than death ;
With speechless lip and tearless eye
We see thee catch his parting cry,
And watch his fleeting breath.

Affection, faith, and piety,
O MARY, we behold in thee :
Be such thy proper claim !

**“Blest among women” is thy lot :
But higher meed we yield thee not,
Nor more than woman name.**

**Nor solemn “Hail” to thee we pay,
Nor pray’r to thee for mercy pray,
Nor hymn of glory raise ;
Nor thine we deem is God’s high throne ;
Nor thine the birth-right of thy Son,
The Mediator’s praise.**

**Mother of JESUS, Parent dear !
If aught of earthly thou couldst hear,
If aught of human see ;
What pangs thy humble heart must wring,
To know thy Saviour, Lord, and King,
Dishonour’d thus for thee !**

ST. MARK.

John whose surname was Mark. Acts xii. 12.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE OF ST. MARK.

THE Saint of this day is one of the two who are commemorated by the Church on the sole ground of their being Evangelists : a name, which was at first given to all those who preached the Gospel, though it was in process of time confined to those four, who wrote the history of the life and ministry of our Saviour, and whose four Gospels make part of the canon, or rule of faith, contained in holy Scripture. St. Luke is the other Evangelist, who stands on the same footing as St. Mark, the saint of this day. St. Matthew and St. John were Apostles, as well as Evangelists. The great benefit however derived by the Church from these labours of St. Mark and St. Luke, in leaving behind them authentick histories of our Lord, is a very sufficient reason for their being celebrated in the annual course

of the Church's holydays, and being made occasions of grateful commemoration to the honour of Almighty God.

In the Acts of the Apostles mention is several times made of "John whose surname was Mark." When Peter was delivered by the Angel out of the hand of Herod, by whom he had been imprisoned, the first place of refuge to which he resorted was "the house of Mary, the mother of John, whose surname was Mark^a." When Paul and Barnabas had "fulfilled their ministry" of carrying relief from Antioch to the brethren of Judea, and returned from Jerusalem, they "took with them John whose surname was Mark^b." The same person is spoken of again in a subsequent passage under this double appellation^c. Sometimes also he is called by the name of John only: and sometimes only by the name of Mark^e, or, which is the same thing, by that of Marcus^f, the difference being solely in our translation, which has thus rendered variously, and with some inconvenience, what in the original language is the same name. In one of the passages last alluded to, namely, in St. Paul's Epistle to the

^a Acts xii. 12.

^b Acts xxi. 25.

^c Acts xv. 37.

^d Acts xiii. 5, 13.

^e Acts xv. 39. 2 Tim. iv. 11.

^f Col. iv. 10. Philem. 24.

Colossians, he is mentioned with an addition, as "Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas." There is little, if any, doubt that all these passages have reference to the same "John, whose surname was Mark."

In the close of St. Peter's first Epistle mention again is made of a person whose name was Mark: "The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you: and so doth Marcus my son." It is generally, or even universally, allowed, that this Mark is the Evangelist: but it has been doubted by some writers, whether he be the same as John surnamed Mark, mentioned in the foregoing passages of the Acts and of St. Paul's Epistles. The grounds of this doubt are perhaps not very valid: so that we may reasonably and safely concur in Dr. Lightfoot's opinion, as cited with approbation by Dr. Lardner, when, making observations upon the first Epistle of St. Peter, Dr. Lightfoot remarks, "He sends this Epistle, says he, by Silvanus, Paul's old attendant, but now with Peter....His naming of Mark with him calls our thoughts back to what has been mentioned of Mark heretofore: his being with Paul at Rome, and his coming from him into the east. To suppose two Marks, one with Peter, and another with Paul, is to breed confusion where there needeth not....It is easily seen how

John Mark came into familiarity with Paul and Peter. And other Mark we can find none in the New Testament, unless of our own invention ... He it was that wrote the Gospel." Indeed "it is plain," as Mr. Jones on the Canon of the New Testament observes, "that Mark, mentioned in the Acts and in St. Paul's Epistles, was an assistant to the Apostles; and the same is certain as to Mark the Evangelist, namely, that he was assistant, companion, or interpreter of Peter. Unless therefore we will suppose, that St. Paul's assistant and St. Peter's were both of the same name, we must conclude that the Mark, mentioned in the Acts and St. Paul's Epistles, was one and the same person, who at different times was with Paul and Peter engaged in the same work." We proceed then with our observations on the Evangelist, the Saint of this day: and shall make no scruple in adopting the decision of several learned writers, and understanding this same Mark to be intended, as often as we find his name in the Acts and the Epistles. It may be only requisite further to premise, that the authority of this Gospel is not affected by the question concerning the identity of Mark the Evangelist, and Mark, also called John, the nephew of Barnabas; since all agree that the writer of this Gospel was the familiar companion of St.

Peter, and that he was qualified for the work which he undertook by having heard for many years the publick discourses and private conversation of that Apostle, as we shall hereafter have more particular occasion to remark.

The father of Mark is not mentioned. His mother was Mary, a pious woman at Jerusalem, and an early believer, at whose house the disciples used to assemble, in seasons of trouble and difficulty, as well as in those of serenity and safety to the Church. For at the time when James was killed by Herod with the sword, and Peter was imprisoned to gratify the malice of the Jews, upon the delivery of Peter out of prison, as already noticed, "he came to the house of Mary, the mother of John, whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together praying." So that the very first mention of our Evangelist under this his double appellation exhibits his family in a situation of friendly intimacy with one of the Apostles, with whom we shall find him hereafter particularly associated.

The mother of Mark was sister to Barnabas : and, Barnabas having been a Levite^s, it has been inferred probably from that circumstance that his nephew likewise was a Levite and a

^s Acts iv. 36.

priest. That he was a Jew appears from St. Paul's Epistle to the Colossians, where he is mentioned as being "of the circumcision ^h." His original name was John, the surname of Mark having probably been adopted by him when he left Judea to go into foreign countries : a practice not unusual among the Jews of that age, who frequently assumed a name more familiar to the nations which they visited, than that by which they had been distinguished in their own country ⁱ. Some ancient writers have represented him to have been one of Christ's seventy disciples : a representation, which cannot be either affirmed or denied with certainty ; nor can it be certainly affirmed, that he ever saw or heard the Lord Jesus ^k. But from what has been already mentioned of him it is clear, that he was an early believer in the Gospel, and an early associate of St. Peter. By some learned men indeed he has been supposed to have been converted by that Apostle, who speaks of him as "his son ;" and who has been understood to denote by that appellation, that he had converted and baptized him. Yet perhaps it may denote no more than a high degree of affection and tenderness, and a respect for the faithful services, which Peter had experi-

^h Col. iv. 11.ⁱ Dr. Cave.^k Dr. Lardner.

enced from him, in like manner as St. Paul says of Timothy, that "as a son with the father, he had served with him in the Gospel:" more especially it may have been given him, as Origen asserts, because he wrote his Gospel at Peter's dictation¹. Certain at all events it is, that he was an early friend and associate of Peter, as well as of Paul and Barnabas, as we have now occasion to observe.

For on the return of these two Apostles from Jerusalem, whither they had brought relief for the poor Christians of Judea, Mark accompanied them to Antioch in Syria: and when after a short period they went forth to other regions, he attended them as "their minister," that is, either to minister unto them, or to assist and labour with them in their ministry^m; passing through the island of Cyprus, to Salamis and Paphos, and thence sailing back to the continent, and landing at Perga in Pamphylia, where he departed from them and returned to Jerusalem. Thus it is plain that he did not accompany them in their further progress to Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, and other places in Asia Minor, but went to Jerusalem. The cause of his quitting them is not mentioned: nor is it

¹ Dr. Lardner.

^m Acts xiii. 5.

mentioned what further became of him at this time. It is to be supposed that he associated himself, on his return to Judea, with St. Peter and the other Apostles, who were remaining at Jerusalem, and was present with them at their discourses and their devotions.

A considerable interval of time elapsed, before any further mention is made of our Evangelist. But at length we find him again brought under our notice on occasion of another journey meditated in conjunction by the two Apostles, whose minister and companion he had formerly been. "Some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again, and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do. And Barnabas determined to take with them John whose surname was Mark. But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them in Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work. And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the otherⁿ." Of the cause of Mark's having quitted them before, and of the merits of the dissention which prevailed between the two Apostles in consequence, we know nothing. It is only further recorded, that

ⁿ Acts xv. 36.

upon the separation which ensued between them, they followed their several courses, each accompanied by an attendant, when "Barnabas took Mark, and sailed to Cyprus."

It is to be presumed that Paul had good reasons in his own mind for refusing to allow of the attendance of Mark on this occasion. On the supposition then that the latter had acted improperly in quitting them before, it should be observed that he appears to have been desirous of compensating his error by his willingness to attend them now. The natural relation between Barnabas and himself may perhaps have paved the way for their readier reconciliation: but, although Paul would not now accept of his attendance, he was afterwards fully reconciled to him, as appears from several notices in his subsequent Epistles, written at Rome during his confinement there, previously to the date of which we again lose sight of Mark. That Mark was the assistant and companion of St. Paul during part of his confinement at Rome, is manifest from the Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon. For in them among the salutations conveyed by the Apostle from the brethren at that time with him, express mention is made of Mark, (he is called Marcus in our translation;) recorded as one of the Apostle's "fellow-labourers" in the Epistle to

Philemon; and with the addition of a direction concerning him in the Epistle to the Colossians, indicative of St. Paul's kindliness of feeling towards him: "Aristarchus my fellow prisoner saluteth you, and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas: touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you receive him." And then, having mentioned a third person "of the circumcision," he adds, "These only are my fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me." And in his second Epistle to Timothy, written probably after those just cited, and during the Apostle's second imprisonment at Rome, is a direction concerning Mark, accompanied by a testimony in his favour, which under the circumstances of the separation before recited ought not to escape our observation. "Take Mark, and bring him with thee, for he is profitable to me for the ministry." This desire of the Apostle to have the attendance of Mark, together with the profit which he promised himself from his attendance and co-operation in the service of the Gospel, shews his opinion of the excellence of Mark's character, of his intelligence and integrity, of his zeal and activity, whatever temporary cause may have formerly occasioned a coolness towards him.

These particulars concerning St. Mark are

derived from the sacred writings, which supply no further information. From ancient writers of the Church we learn, that in the latter part of his life he became the companion of St. Peter, with whom we have seen him to be acquainted in an early period of it: Irenæus speaks of him as “the disciple and interpreter of Peter,” being probably employed to unfold and expound more particularly to the people, what the Apostle had preached in a more compendious form°. During a long course of attendance on that Apostle, he had continual opportunities of hearing and laying up in his mind his relations of our Saviour’s life; which accordingly he is said by Clement of Alexandria to have committed to writing at the request of “Peter’s hearers at Rome, who not content with a single hearing, nor with an unwritten instruction in the divine doctrine, intreated Mark, the follower of Peter, that he would leave with them in writing a memorial of the doctrine, which had been delivered to them by word of mouth: nor did they desist, until they had prevailed with him. Thus they were the means of writing the Gospel, which is called according to Mark. It is said, that, when the Apostle knew what had been done,

° Mr. Jones on the Canon of the New Testament.

he was pleased with the zeal of the men, and authorized that Scripture to be read in the churches^p."

By different authors this event is described in different terms. Tertullian, about the year 200, speaks of Mark as an apostolical man, or companion of Apostles; and says, "that the Gospel, published by Mark, may be reckoned Peter's, whose interpreter he was." Origen, about 230, says, "The second Gospel is that according to Mark, who wrote it as Peter dictated it to him; who therefore calls him his son in his Catholick Epistle." Eusebius, about 315, says, "Peter, out of abundance of modesty, thought not himself worthy to write a Gospel. But Mark, who was his friend and disciple, is said to have recorded Peter's relations of the acts of Jesus." And, he adds, "Peter testifies these things of himself; for all things in Mark are said to be memoirs of Peter's discourses." Thus much appears clear from the various testimonies upon the subject, that Mark was for a considerable portion of his life a companion and disciple of Peter: that he had continual opportunities of hearing Peter's narratives of our Lord's ministry: and that he profited by those opportunities to give a faith-

^p Dr. Lardner.

ful history of it in the Gospel, which having been composed by him is known by his name; but which, from the circumstances of its composition, might be properly denominated, as indeed there do not want instances of its having been denominated, the Gospel according to St. Peter^q.

The Gospel, thus written by St. Mark, was published by him at Rome or in Italy, probably about the year 64 or 65 of the Christian era^r. By Eusebius and Jerome we are informed, that the Evangelist afterwards went into Egypt, and preached in that country the Gospel which he had written, and planted there many churches, especially one of great note at Alexandria, over which he exercised episcopal authority, and provided in it for a due succession of legitimate pastors^s. He died in the reign of Nero, probably towards the end of it; or about the 68th year of the Christian era; and was buried at Alexandria: but whether he died by a natural or a violent death, is not certainly known. By some writers the latter has been asserted, together with several particulars supposed to have attended his tragical end^t. But the silence of Eusebius and other more ancient authors, as

^q Mr. Jones.

^r Dr. Cave, Mr. Jones, Dr. Lardner.

^s Dr. Cave, Dr. Lardner.

^t Mr. Nelson.

well as of Jerome, who probably would have recorded that he received the crown of martyrdom, if such had been known to be the fact, has been judged an argument that he did not die a martyr, whilst the expressions of Jerome, in recording the death of St. Mark, seem to imply a natural death^u. It has been a tradition in the Romish Church, that his body, at least the remains of it, were with great pomp removed from Alexandria to Venice, where they are religiously honoured: the account of this translation is fabulous; but it is true, that St. Mark is esteemed the tutelar saint and patron of the Venetian state, and that a very rich and gorgeous church is erected in that city to his memory^x.

REFLEXIONS.

UPON the personal character of St. Mark the foregoing narrative, which contains all the information we possess concerning him, will not supply us with many reflexions. Generally that narrative sets him before us in the character of an estimable and amiable man, zealous and active in the propagation of the Gospel, of which he was an early believer. His knowledge of Christianity and his zeal in its behalf

^u Dr. Lardner.

^x Dr. Cave, Mr. Jones.

were indeed so conspicuous, as to recommend him to Paul and Barnabas as a fit person to be taken with them for an assistant in the execution of their ministry. And if he committed a fault in departing from Paul and Barnabas in Pamphylia, and proceeding not with them to the work, as the manner, in which Paul treated him in consequence may lead us to suppose was the case in his estimation, he shewed a disposition to atone for and amend his fault by his readiness to accompany them afterwards in their journeys; he accordingly proceeded on the work with Barnabas, who no doubt judged his assistance valuable and important, and held his character in esteem; and in the sequel he became an earnest, active, and useful assistant of Paul.

To these particulars in his character we have the testimony of St. Paul himself: and surely it is no slight praise to our Evangelist, to have been recorded by that great Apostle, as one who was "profitable unto him for the ministry;" as "his fellow-labourer and fellow-worker unto the kingdom of God;" and as one who was "a comfort unto him" in his bonds and sufferings for the Gospel. With any particulars of his intercourse with St. Peter we have no definite acquaintance: but it cannot be reasonably doubted, that he displayed the same valuable qualities in

his attendance upon that Apostle also: nor that, if St. Peter thought good to speak of Mark as "his son," Mark was justly intitled to the appellation by reason of his faithful and filial services, and his affectionate and devoted attachment to him as to a spiritual father. The very appellation bestowed upon him from such a quarter is in itself a title of honour; and reflects praise on the character of him, upon whom it is bestowed. Nor are we without a testimony to the great estimation, in which his character must have been held by the primitive Church, forasmuch as he was promoted to the highest rank of the pastoral office.

Upon St. Mark, as an Evangelist, the following reflexions may be made. Whether or not he had enjoyed opportunities of seeing and hearing the Lord Jesus, and accordingly whether or not he could write an account of our Lord's life and ministry from his own personal knowledge, is not certain, nor is it important: but there is every reason for us to be assured, that, being himself an early believer of the Gospel, he was an early disciple and companion of the Apostles, and admitted to their intimate acquaintance and conversation; that he was particularly received into the familiarity, not only of Paul and Barnabas, but of Peter likewise; and that by having been con-

tinually present at the preaching of Peter, when he delivered by word of mouth his relations of the acts of Jesus, our Evangelist was well qualified to report the events and discourses, which he has recorded in his Gospel^y.

Thus the Gospel of St. Mark is intitled to be considered, not merely as his Gospel, the result of the diligence of an ordinary inquirer, but as the Gospel of St. Peter also, containing, as it does, a faithful exhibition of what St. Peter taught. "The Gospel, published by Mark," saith Tertullian, "may be accounted the Gospel of Peter, whose interpreter he was." It may be so accounted, forasmuch as it is a transcript of Peter's teaching, delivered in writing by a person, whose opportunities of knowing it accurately are indisputable; and whose fidelity has never been questioned, but rather has been constantly acknowledged from the earliest times, even when the writing was first delivered to those, who had heard from Peter himself the narratives which our Evangelist recorded.

But the claim of St. Mark's Gospel to this distinction may be placed upon still higher ground. Probably it was written by the direction of St. Peter: probably under his dictation: or it may be that he went no further, than to approve of it,

^y Dr. Townson on the Gospels.

and authorize it to be publicly read, when it was written. Upon either of these views it may be regarded, not only as a faithful transcript of St. Peter's teaching, but as the accredited Gospel of St. Peter; and it is thus intitled to our implicit confidence as stamped by the warranty and sanction of an inspired Apostle.

Agreeably to this fact, of the Gospel of St. Mark being the record of St. Peter's teaching, it has been observed, that the Gospel itself affords evidences of its having been written, according to that Apostle's discourses, or according to informations and directions given by him to the Evangelist².

St. Chrysostom, no incompetent judge of the language of the Apostles, discovers in this Gospel the concise style of St. Peter, as in St. Luke's the more diffuse diction of St. Paul. And certainly there are passages in it, where St. Peter appears to have directed, not only the matter and circumstances, but the very words of the narration.

"The pillow in the hinder part of the ship on which Jesus was asleep;" the "green grass, on which the multitude sat down" to be miraculously fed; "the rising of blind Bartimeus, and the casting away of his garment," when our

² Dr. Townson.

Lord called him; "the colt tied by the door without, in a place where two ways met:" these and many other minute matters indicate, that the historian had been a spectator; who described them because they were imprinted on his mind in seeing the action which he relates. And the distinct and particular manner in which the principal facts are generally told is a further evidence of this point.

Then, as to the matter of the narrative, with regard to Christ, scarce any action that was done, or word that was spoken by him, is mentioned, at which St. Peter was not present: so that the Gospel appears to have been both dictated by this Apostle, and to have been limited with scrupulous exactness to those occurrences in the life of Christ, which he could attest as seen or heard by himself^a.

And with regard to Peter himself, though this Gospel was composed by his son in Christ, it consults his credit and reputation less, in every view, than any one of the others.

Several things, very honourable to St. Peter, are related in the other Gospels, which are not noticed in this of St. Mark: because, saith Eusebius, "as is probable, Peter did not relate them in his sermons: for he did not think fit to

^a Dr. Townson.

bear testimony to himself by relating what Jesus said to him or of him: therefore Mark has omitted them." And it was the observation of Chrysostom, occasioned by Mark's omission of an occurrence honourable to St. Peter, "that perhaps his Master forbade him to insert such things as tended to aggrandize him^b." Several incidents, illustrative of the good qualities of Peter, of his remarkable humility, of his faith, and his ardent zeal for Christ, and of Christ's love and favour towards him, are thus omitted by his disciple and companion: omissions, which cannot be so well ascribed to any other cause, as to the modesty and reservedness of Peter, who, as he would decline from mentioning such things in his preaching, would discourage their being put down in writing^c.

On the contrary, St. Mark relates the history of St. Peter's denial of Christ, with the same enumeration of circumstances, and aggravations of the fault, that are recorded by St. Matthew: indeed it is very remarkable, and the remark is made by Chrysostom, that this fall of Peter is related by Mark with more particularity than by the other two Evangelists. And yet, when he proceeds to mention the Apostle's repentance and the tears consequent upon it, he

^b Mr. Jones, Dr. Townson.

^c Dr. Lardner.

dwells upon it less, and speaks of it with more coldness, than the others. But with respect to St. Peter's infirmities, one general reflexion may suffice; that whatever appears of that kind in the other Gospels, is faithfully recorded in St. Mark's^d.

St. Mark's Gospel is the shortest and most compendious of the four. Nevertheless it contains many things peculiar to himself and not noticed by any other Evangelist^e. Of these the most important probably are the narratives of hearing and speech being bestowed by our Lord upon a deaf and dumb man in the seventh chapter, and of his giving sight to a blind man at Bethsaida in the eighth chapter. At the same time in a great variety of cases, in which his general description corresponds with those of the other Evangelists, he has inserted circumstances peculiar to himself, and intimating a familiar and minute acquaintance with the subject of his narratives. With respect to St. Matthew in particular, it has been observed, that there is scarce any one story related by both these Evangelists, in which St. Mark does not add some considerable circumstances which St. Matthew has not mentioned. Mr. Jones, who has collected several instances in exem-

^d Dr. Townson.

^e Dr. Lardner.

plification of this assertion, satisfactorily shews the absurdity of supposing that St. Mark's Gospel is an epitome or abridgment of St. Matthew's. And Dr. Lardner, having cited a large number of circumstantial additions, not only such as are omitted by St. Matthew, but such as are contained in no one of the Evangelists but St. Mark; and having still forborne to specify many things, which are in this Gospel and in no other; concludes with this observation: "The particulars, that have been alleged, are sufficient to assure us, that St. Mark was not an epitomiser of another author; and that he was well acquainted with the things, of which he undertook to write a history. He writes as an eye-witness, or as one who had full and authentick information at the first hand. In a word, St. Mark's Gospel, though short, is a very valuable and masterly performance."

As the Church commemorates this Saint in his character of an Evangelist, so by the Collect of the day she directs us to the benefit to be derived from him in that character, teaching us to pray that Almighty God, who hath "instructed his holy Church with the heavenly doctrine of his Evangelist St. Mark," will "give us grace that being not like children, carried away with every blast of vain doctrine, we may be established in the truth of his holy Gospel,

through Jesus Christ our Lord." The foregoing reflexions may lead us to see the fitness of this language in ascribing the doctrine of St. Mark to the "instruction of Almighty God," and in denominating it "the heavenly doctrine." For we thence see, that his Gospel is not to be regarded in the light of a merely human composition, or as deriving its value, as an historical record, from the care and diligence of the author, however in those respects qualified for the performance; but as virtually the production of an inspired Apostle of Christ. Although actually written by St. Mark, and commonly known and cited as his Gospel, it really transmits to us, as we have seen, the teaching of St. Peter; and is on that account most entitled to our deference as a "heavenly doctrine," conveying to us "instruction from Almighty God." It has been well and pertinently observed, that "St. Mark is not received as canonical, only because he was a companion of the Apostles; but because he wrote under the direction of an inspired Apostle, St. Peter; and who, as Eusebius saith, approved the book by the revelation of the Holy Ghost¹."

The use to which his writing is to be put, is that which the Church further points out to our

¹ Mr. Jones.

notice ; namely, that “ being not like children carried away with every blast of vain doctrine, we may be established in the truth of God’s holy Gospel.” The Gospel of God is the good tidings of salvation procured for us by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Of this Gospel, of these “good tidings,” (such is the meaning of the word,) we have several different records in the writings of the four Evangelists, called Gospels, as conveying the history of the good tidings of salvation, in the history of the birth, life, actions, precepts, promises, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ^s. And it is much to be observed, how accurately these several records agree together in all things material, however they may be distinguished by their own respective peculiarities ; so that a study of the several Gospels is not calculated to lead to any diversity of belief, but they all contribute to establish us in the truth of that one harmonious revelation of God’s will, that one holy Gospel, which he has caused to be made known to the world in his only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Of these records one has been communicated to us by the Saint of this day. Hence, whilst we may perceive the propriety of gratefully

^s Mr. Nelson.

commemorating a person, who has been the instrument of conveying to us so valuable a document, we are admonished of the proper manner of commemorating him and testifying our gratitude for the benefit, as in the case likewise of the other Evangelists, namely, by studying the Gospels thus bestowed upon us, and applying them to the confirmation of our Christian faith. For, whatever gifts were given by our Lord, when having ascended up to heaven he "gave gifts unto men" by that Holy Spirit whom he sent to supply his place with his followers, they were given "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." Of these gifts there are none more important to us, than such as were employed in committing to writing, for the use of all future generations, the narratives of our Lord's life and ministry. And most surely does it behove us to study these narratives with all the powers of our understanding, and the full devotion of our hearts: till, as we read in the Epistle of the day, whence the sentiment in the Collect is taken, "we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; that we be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about

with every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love^h.”

Collects.

“O ALMIGHTY God, who hast intructed thy holy Church with the heavenly doctrine of thy Evangelist Saint Mark; Give us grace, that, being not like children carried away with every blast of vain doctrine, we may be established in the truth of thy holy Gospel; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen*ⁱ.”

“BLESSED Lord, who hast caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning; Grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them; that by patience, and comfort of thy holy word, we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. *Amen*^k.”

^h Eph. iv. 13, &c. ⁱ For the day. ^k For the second Sunday in Advent.

“ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, heavenly Father, we give thee humble thanks that thou hast vouchsafed to call us to the knowledge of thy grace and faith in thee; increase this knowledge, and confirm this faith in us evermore. Give thy holy Spirit to us thy servants, that being in baptism born again, and being made heirs of everlasting salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, we may continue thy servants, and attain thy promises; through the same our Lord Jesus Christ thy Son, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever. *Amen*¹.”

¹Ministration of Baptism.

If praise be theirs, who living told
The Saviour's life in days of old,
'Tis theirs, who, though themselves be dead,
Still wide the saving knowledge spread.

MARK, in thy faithful page we read
Each holy word, each wondrous deed;
Distinct our Saviour's form we see,
And this the debt we owe to thee.

Had no recording pen defin'd,
And clear before his followers' mind
The Saviour's life and doctrine brought,
Told what he did and what he taught:

What spots might mar the Christian's Creed,
What devious tracks his steps mislead,
With grief of heart and burning brow
Let ROME, deluded ROME, avow.

Then praise, Historians blest, to you,
Harmonious, simple, clear, and true :
But more than praise to Him be paid,
Whose Spirit taught what you conveyed !
May He illumine our darkling sight,
To read, with single heart, aright
The treasures in his volume stor'd,
And find Him in his written word !

ST. PHILIP AND ST. JAMES.

Philip...and James the son of Alphæus.

MARK iii. 18.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE OF ST. PHILIP.

THE Church on this day commemorates two of the Apostles, St. Philip, and St. James the son of Alphæus: probably because it is supposed to be the anniversary of the martyrdom or death of each. We will consider them one after the other, in the order wherein they are mentioned, being that in which they stand in the catalogue of the Apostles, as reported by the three first Evangelists: by whom however they are not associated together, Philip having Bartholomew for his companion, and James being followed by Thaddæus in the two first Gospels, and by Simon Zelotes in that of St. Luke.

Philip was a native of Bethsaida, on the sea of Galilee, which has been already noticed as “the city of Andrew and Peter.” Of his

parentage and early life the sacred history gives no information : but the situation and customary occupation of the place make it probable that, like Andrew and Peter, he was a fisherman. He had the honour of being the first called among our Lord's followers, as we read in the first chapter of St. John's Gospel : for though Andrew, and another of John the Baptist's disciples, and after them Peter, had previously sought and conversed with Christ, they can hardly be regarded as having had on that occasion a distinct call to "follow him," as is expressly said with respect to Philip, who thereupon appears to have attached himself to our Lord.

Philip, being assured of the identity of Jesus of Nazareth with him who had been foretold in the law and the prophets, imparted the intelligence to Nathanael, and conducted him to the expected Saviour. And there is every probability, that he was one of the disciples, who soon after attended at the marriage feast in Cana of Galilee, when Jesus performed his first miracle, "and manifested forth his glory," to the establishment of the faith of his disciples.

It was about a year after his call to be a follower of Jesus, that Philip was constituted one of his Apostles ; unless we understand the

former call to have been to the Apostleship, which is hardly consistent with the narratives of the choosing and ordaining of the twelve. In the enumeration of these he is subsequently mentioned; but without any special note beyond his mere name, to distinguish him from the rest of his brethren.

After his call to the Apostleship, but little is recorded of him in holy writ. It was to him however that our Saviour proposed the question, whence they should buy bread, that the five thousand might eat in the wilderness; and received from him the answer, that "two hundred pennyworth of bread was not sufficient for them, that every one of them might take a little^a." It was to him, that the Greeks or Gentile proselytes, who "came up to Jerusalem to worship at the feast," addressed themselves for the purpose of being admitted to a sight of the Saviour; which by means of Philip and Andrew they obtained^b. And it was with him that our blessed Lord had that memorable discourse concerning himself, a little before the last paschal supper, as related in the Gospel for this festival: when Philip, having besought our Lord to "shew them the Father," received from him in return a gentle reproof for his igno-

^a John vi. 5, &c.

^b John xii. 20.

rance, accompanied by a most remarkable and important declaration concerning his own nature. "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me, hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words, that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself: but the Father, that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake^c."

These are the only occasions, on which St. Philip is mentioned by the sacred history; except that in the Acts his name occurs together with those of the other Apostles in the narrative of events after our Lord's ascension^d. On the separation of the Apostles into the different regions of the world, he is said by some writers to have had the upper Asia for his province; and by others to have preached and planted Christianity in Scythia^e. There appears good evidence in Eusebius, the ecclesiastical historian, that he resided for some time and died at Hierapolis, a city of Phrygia, mentioned by St. Paul in his Epistle to the Colossians^f;

^c John xiv. 8—11. ^d Acts i. 13. ^e Dr. Cave. ^f Col. iv. 13.

now called by the Turks Pambuck, meaning in our language, *Cotton*, from the white cliff on the side of a hill, where it is situated^g. It is supposed by some authors to have derived its name of Hierapolis, or the holy city, from the multitude of temples and fanes with which it abounded: and a modern traveller, who visited it, has remarked, that “the ruins of vast fabricks are so numerous, that we may well believe that the false gods had once there a great possession and share of worship^h.” Such a city appears to have been well adapted for an apostolical residence: and it may be reckoned very probable, that St. Philip was for a while very useful in preaching the Gospel in those parts, and that he wrought many miracles among the peopleⁱ.

The manner of his death is uncertain. By later writers he is said to have undergone martyrdom; and the cross, the same kind of instrument on which Peter suffered, has been specified as the instrument of the death of Philip, which has been recited with many particulars. But this event appears to have been unknown to earlier writers, such as Eusebius and Jerome: and Clement of Alexandria, at as early a period

^g Dr. Wells on the Geography of the New Testament.

^h Sir P. Rycaut, quoted by Dr. Wells. ⁱ Dr. Lardner.

as the second century, speaks of him by name as one of the Apostles, who did not die by martyrdom^k.

The same Clement reckons him as one of the married Apostles, which indeed is generally affirmed by the ancients: and Eusebius cites Papias, a very early writer, as saying that Philip had daughters, two of whom were unmarried, and lived with their father at Hierapolis; and that he had been informed by the daughters of Philip, that a dead man had been restored to life in the time of this Apostle^l. He left no writings behind him; though the Gnosticks are said to have alleged some such in defence of their heresy.

REFLEXIONS.

THE ingenuous readiness of Philip in complying with the invitation of Jesus, when called on to follow him, may serve for a lesson that we be not backward in complying with the like invitation, which by his word and ministers he is continually addressing to us. The reasons which satisfied Philip of the claims of Jesus to his obedience are not distinctly stated. It can hardly be doubted however, that he was well versed in the writings of Moses and the Pro-

^k Dr. Lardner.

^l Calmet, Dr. Lardner.

phets, by whom the Messiah had been foretold ; and was actuated by the general expectations, at that time prevalent amongst the Jews, concerning the approaching appearance of the Messiah : and it is reasonable to suppose, that Jesus gave him some intimation, as he afterwards did to Nathanael, which the brevity of the history has not specified, to convince him that he was that person, “ of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write.” At the same time the divine grace, in all probability, more immediately accompanied the command of our Saviour, inclining those, whom he called, to obey the command. But whatever reasons operated with Philip to believe and obey, it is evident that we have reasons enough for our belief and obedience ; and we ought accordingly to exercise them after the example of this Apostle, and under the influence of divine grace, which will never be wanting to us in the ordinary dispensations of God’s providence. And, as he soon after received a plain attestation to the character of his Lord in the glory, which he manifested forth by his miraculous power at the marriage in Cana, so we may be assured, that every step we take in the practice of religion will be our introduction to higher measures of grace ; and will lead us more and more to a persuasion of the divine character of him

in whom we have believed, and to a corresponding uprightness of conduct.

Again, the friendly zeal of Philip in imparting to Nathanael the knowledge, which he had received of the Messiah, may prompt us to communicate to others the religious knowledge which we have the happiness to possess. Like the other blessings, which a bountiful Providence is pleased to bestow upon us, religious knowledge is given for the edification and benefit of others as well as for our own. If others through our means are desirous of becoming acquainted with the Saviour, as the Greeks who sought Philip's aid that they might be brought to the sight of Jesus, we should forward their good desires: or, if they signify not their desire, still we should on all fit occasions bring them to the knowledge of him, as Philip, the first-called disciple, brought Nathanael. Prejudices will frequently occupy the minds of those, to whom we may have occasion to address ourselves; as in the case of Nathanael; who, though evidently a pious and well-disposed man, and one of those who "looked for redemption in Israel," and, as our blessed Lord bore honourable testimony to his character, "an Israelite indeed, in whom was no guile;" yet received Philip's declaration concerning Jesus with a question suggested by his prepossessions, "Can any good

thing come out of Nazareth?" It will be our business to meet such objections in the spirit of meekness, and with appeals to the good sense and candour of those who make them. And in many cases doubtless we may have good confidence, that the like beneficial effects will ensue, as in the case of Nathanael, who, having complied with Philip's invitation to "come and see," was soon induced to adopt his belief, and to exclaim to Jesus in the language of devout admiration, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel."

Whilst we commend these particulars in St. Philip's conduct as worthy of our imitation, there are one or two points of a more questionable nature, which may be made the occasion of cautionary reflexion. When, for instance, our blessed Lord in the wilderness inquired of him "to prove him," "whence shall we buy bread that these may eat," a different answer might reasonably have been expected from that which the Apostle gave, "two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little." He who had witnessed how Jesus "manifested forth his glory" by turning the water into wine at Cana, and who had doubtless heard of the further foundation which he had laid for his disciples' faith in the miraculous draught of fishes, might

have well supposed that his Lord was capable of supplying the wants of the fainting multitude by his own inherent power. The answer of the disciple, by referring to merely human means of supply, should seem to betray a deficiency of faith in that power. Let it convey to us a lesson, that we be not guilty of the like distrust: but when it pleases God "to prove" us, by proposing to us, as it were, questions concerning the mode of relief in cases of difficulty and distress, let it teach us to place our reliance on that power and goodness and superabundant bounty which we have heretofore experienced, for the removal of our present indigence, and the supply of the sustenance and comfort of which we stand in need.

Lastly, the request of Philip to our Saviour, "Shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us," in answer to our Lord's declaration, "If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also; and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him;" appears to betray, if not a grossness in the Apostle's conception concerning the divine nature, at least an ignorance, or a deficiency in proper understanding, concerning the character and nature of the Son of God and his intimate union with the Father. Such appears to be the purport of our blessed Lord's reproof. "Jesus saith unto him, Have

I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake." Language can hardly express with greater perspicuity, as on the one hand the invisible nature of the Almighty Father, so on the other hand his essential and inseparable union with his well-beloved Son, attested by the works which that Son performed on earth. Yet it is of that Son, that we are sometimes called upon to believe, that he is a mere prophet, a mere man! He, who is "the image of the invisible God;" "the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person;" "in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily:" He, who "was in the beginning, who was with God, and who was God;" and "was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father;" and who in that his incarnate state could nevertheless affirm of himself, "He that hath seen me hath seen the

Father; the Father dwelleth in me: I am in the Father and the Father in me; I and the Father are one^m."

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE OF ST. JAMES THE LESS.

WE pass on to the history of the other Saint of this day, "James the son of Alphæus," as he is called by the Evangelists in the enumeration of the Apostles"; called also "James the Less^o," and "the Lord's brother^p," in other passages of Scripture; and by ecclesiastical writers "James the Just^q:" for from the best evidence of antiquity there is sufficient reason to be satisfied of the identity of the person described under these several appellations.

St. James was "the son of Alphæus" or Cleophas, which seem to be the same name differently written, or different names for the same person: and he is thus described in the

^m Col. i. 15. Heb. i. 3. Col. ii. 9. John i. 1, 14. xiv. 9, 10, 11. x. 10.

ⁿ Matt. x. 3. Mark iii. 18. Luke vi.

15. Acts i. 13.

^o Mark xv. 40.

^p Gal. i. 19.

^q Dr. Cave, Dr. Lardner.

Gospels and the Acts, to distinguish him from the other Apostle James, the son of Zebedee.

The cause of his being called "the Lord's brother" is not ascertained. By some it has been supposed, that Joseph and Alphæus were the same person; that our Apostle was the son of Joseph, afterwards espoused to the blessed Virgin, by a former wife; and was thus reputed our Lord's brother in the same sense in which our Lord was reputed Joseph's son'. By others it has been supposed that Cleophas and Joseph were brothers; that the former died without issue and that Joseph raised up seed unto his brother; that accordingly James, being the first-born of Joseph, was called the son of Cleophas; and was also called "the Lord's brother," because the Lord also was called the son of Joseph*. This appears to have been the most ancient opinion. But the opinion most prevalent among later writers is that of Jerome, that St. James is called "the Lord's brother" in that extended sense, usual with the Hebrews and not unknown to the Greeks and Romans, in which the term was applied to cousins and near kinsmen, as in the cases of Abraham and Lot, of Laban and Jacob; that,

' Dr. Cave.

* Dr. Lardner.

as St. Mark informs us, the name of the mother of James the Less was Mary; that, as St. John says, "Mary, the wife of Cleophas," and of course the mother of James, was sister to "Mary the mother of Jesus;" and that in consequence James, who is called the brother, was in fact cousin-german to our Lord^t.

He is called "James the Less," with reference, as hath been supposed, to the other James the son of Zebedee; as being perhaps younger in age than he, or later called to the apostleship, or less familiarly admitted to our Lord's privacy and confidence, or of less consideration and eminence in the evangelical history: or probably he was so called on account of his stature; a conjecture, which is favoured by the literal sense of the original word in the positive degree, "James the little;" after the manner of the Romans, as well as of our own and other modern nations of Europe, with whom it has been customary to give names corresponding with particular accidents of the body^u.

The appellation of "the Just," which is never coupled with his name in the New Testament, but by which he seems to have been often called even in his lifetime, as well as afterwards;

^t Dr. Lardner, Bp. Tomline.

^u Ibid.

speaks for itself. It was evidently a title of honour, indicative of the eminent holiness and integrity of his life*.

Of the place of his birth, or of his way of living before his call to be a disciple and apostle of Christ, or of any particulars in his conduct afterwards during our Lord's continuance upon earth, the sacred history gives us no intimation. After the resurrection he was honoured by a special appearance of our Lord, which, although not noticed by the Evangelists, is recorded by St. Paul to the Corinthians, without however mentioning any particulars concerning it†. It took place, as we may judge from St. Paul's allusion, between that to the five hundred brethren on the mountain of Galilee, and that to all the Apostles, after their return to Jerusalem. That James the Less was the person, to whom this appearance was vouchsafed, though not stated by St. Paul, has been the common opinion and tradition of the Church. The cause and some circumstances of the appearance are cited by Jerome from an apocryphal work, intitled "the Gospel according to the Hebrews;" but the cause assigned is improbable, and the circumstances appear to be fabulous; so that the simple fact may be

* Dr. Cave.

† 1 Cor. xv. 8.

considered as standing where the Scripture leaves it.

St. James, together with the rest of the eleven, was a witness of our Lord's ascension, and a partaker in the promised effusion of the Holy Ghost. After which events, but at what distance of time is uncertain, he was chosen Bishop of the Church in Jerusalem: a station of eminence, to which he was elevated in preference even to Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, who had been peculiarly honoured by our Lord on earth. The cause of his elevation has been supposed to be his relationship to our blessed Lord^s, probably not without regard to the excellent qualities which distinguished his character and conduct. By some of the ancients it has been said, that the dignity was conferred upon him by Christ himself, who constituted him Bishop, on appearing to him after his resurrection. By others, as particularly by Clement of Alexandria, it has been said with more probability, that he was appointed by the Apostles, especially by the three great Apostles, Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, with the consent, as it should seem, and the approbation of all; and acting under the influence of divine inspiration, or possibly by

* Dr. Cave.

some particular intimation concerning it which our Lord may have left behind him^z. But by whatever mode appointed, the fact is clear that he was Bishop of Jerusalem: and Eusebius and Epiphanius mention, that he wore a plate of gold upon his forehead, as a mark of his episcopacy, with the name of God in all probability inscribed upon it, in imitation of the Jewish high priests^a.

The sacred volume, though it does not relate his elevation, specifies several indications of his episcopal or superintending character. When St. Paul visited Jerusalem the first time after his conversion, "Barnabas took him and brought him to the Apostles," namely, as St. Paul himself informs us, "Peter and James the Lord's brother," who appears to have been at that time residing there, and acting as president of the Church^b. When Peter was delivered out of prison, where he had been confined by Herod Agrippa, "he came to the house of Mary,...where many were gathered together praying." And when he had "declared unto them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison, he said, Go, shew these things unto James, and to the brethren:" that

^z Dr. Lardner, Dr. Cave.
ix. 27. Gal. j. 18, 19.

^a Calmet.

^b Acts

is, to the Church generally, and particularly to James, who presided over it as its Bishop and pastor^c. When the council of "the Apostles and elders" was held at Jerusalem, for the purpose of settling the great controversy concerning the obligation of the Jewish rites and ceremonies upon the Gentile converts, "after there had been much disputing," Peter delivered his sentiments at length, and was followed by Barnabas and Paul; whereupon James proposed the final decretory sentence, defining the terms on which the Gentiles should be received, and introducing them with the expression, "Wherefore my sentence is," according to our translation; or, according to the literal purport of the original, "Wherefore I judge" or "decree^d." Chrysostom, who justly applauds the propriety of James's discourse in the council, observes that "James was Bishop of Jerusalem, and therefore spoke last:" and in conformity with his sentence the council concluded; and sent letters accordingly to the several Gentile churches.

It is upon this occasion that St. Paul speaks of "James, Cephas, and John," (assigning to James the precedence,) as "pillars," "who gave to him and Barnabas the right hand of fellow-

^c Acts xiii. 12—17.

^d Acts xv. 1—29.

^e Dr. Lardner.

ship^f." Afterwards in the same chapter, recording an account of the transactions at Antioch, he says, "that when Peter was come thither, he did eat with the Gentiles, before that certain came from James; but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them of the circumcision^g." Once more: when Paul went up afterwards to Jerusalem, the day after our arrival, says St. Luke, "Paul went in with us unto James, and all the elders were present^h." From all which passages it appears, that our Apostle was regularly resident at Jerusalem; that he united the character of the Bishop to that of the Apostle; and superintended with episcopal vigilance the affairs of the Churchⁱ.

From the same passages it appears, that he was regarded with high respect by the Jewish believers. His conduct indeed gives evidence of an excellent character, and of an admirable combination of zeal and discretion, of a love of truth and condescension to weak brethren. His Epistle confirms that character. And its excellence is further attested by several ecclesiastical writers, who specify various particulars to his honour; especially that his eminent

^f Gal. ii. 9.^g Ver. 12.^h Acts xxi. 17, 18.ⁱ Dr. Lardner.

virtue had acquired for him the appellations, not only of "the Just," but of "the defence of the people;" and that he was in such esteem for his sanctity, that it was no uncommon thing for the people to crowd about him, and strive to touch the hem of his garment.

His virtue however, and the respect in which he was held, could not eventually preserve him from a violent death. This, as well as his character, is set forth with much circumstantial detail in a passage quoted at length by Dr. Lardner from Eusebius's Ecclesiastical History, containing some particulars which throw an air of improbability over certain portions of the narrative, but not so as to impeach its general truth. The fact in brief appears to be, as was the common persuasion of Christians, both before and in the time of Eusebius, that James suffered martyrdom at Jerusalem. Two ancient Christian writers of the second century, Hegesippus and Clement of Alexandria, assure us, that his death was completed by the blow of a fuller's pole, with which they are wont to beat wet clothes. And Hegesippus, in particular and at large, relates that his death was effected in a tumultuous manner. The tumult began at the temple, where the scribes and pharisees and other Jews entered into discourse with James. He, standing upon some eminence, which

Hegesippus calls by a term now generally rendered by us a battlement or pinnacle, openly declared and argued, that Jesus was the Christ or the expected Messiah, and that his doctrine contained full instruction how men may be saved and obtain eternal life. At which some leading men among the Jews were much offended. They then laid hold of him, and perhaps dragged him out of the temple. Some of the people threw stones at him. And though he earnestly prayed to God in the behalf of those who abused him, kneeling down and saying, after the manner of our Lord at his crucifixion, "O Lord God the Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do;" they persisted in their abuses, till one of them, a fuller, struck him on the head with a long pole, which put an end to his life.

His death, as is generally agreed among learned men, happened about the time of the Passover in the year 62; when Festus being dead, and Albinus not yet arrived, the province of Judea was left without a governor: and the unbelieving Jews thus found themselves at liberty to gratify their licentious and turbulent disposition. It is related by Origen, Eusebius, and Jerome, to have been the opinion of Josephus the Jewish historian, and to have been recorded by him as the common opinion,

that the sufferings of the Jews, and the destruction of their city and temple, were owing to the anger of God, excited by the murder of James. This record, if genuine, as proceeding from a person who was not himself a Christian, is a remarkable testimony to the character of the Apostle^k. His memory was cherished with affection by the Christians, so that a monument or pillar was erected to his honour, possibly however not till after the siege of Jerusalem, which Hegesippus, as quoted by Eusebius, describes to have been remaining in his time near the place where the Apostle was killed: and Eusebius himself says, that the throne or episcopal chair, in which James was used to sit, was preserved to his days, and was had in veneration by the church at Jerusalem.

St. James however has left a more permanent memorial behind him in the Epistle which bears his name; and which was written probably not long before his martyrdom, as appears from some passages in it relating to the approaching ruin of the Jewish nation. It is addressed "to the twelve tribes, which are scattered abroad:" evidently therefore to the Jews dispersed over the countries of the east; but whether to believing or unbelieving Jews is

^k Bp. Tomline.

^l Dr. Lardner.

^m Jam. i. 1.

questioned, though the probability should seem to lie in favour of the former, according to the constant practice of the Apostles, whose Epistles are addressed to none but Christian converts. At all events it was principally designed for the benefit and comfort of the believing Jews, whom it animates to support with fortitude and patience any sufferings to which they might be exposed; whilst it inforces the genuine doctrines and practice of the Gospel in opposition to the errors and vices which then prevailed. The principal source of those errors and vices was a misinterpretation of St. Paul's doctrine of justification by faith without the works of the law; whence an inference had been drawn, that moral duties were not essential to salvation; and an abandonment to every species of licentiousness and profligacy had ensued. To this misinterpretation St. James opposes himself: he presses upon Christians their obligation to purity, patience, charity, and all the virtues of a Christian life; and he proves by undeniable arguments, that no faith can justify us before God, and intitle us to eternal happiness, but such as carries with it obedience to God's commandments and the works of a pious and charitable conversation.

The Epistle is written with perspicuity and energy, as well as with much poetical beauty

and elegance in some particular parts ; and it contains a valuable summary of those practical duties and moral virtues, which are required of Christians.

Besides this Epistle a kind of preparatory Gospel has been assigned to him, still extant under the name of Protevangelion ; it is however a spurious and apocryphal work, and contains many things trifling and ridiculous, others contrary to certain and known truths, and others again contradictory to each other. It was not received by the primitive Church, nor has it any pretensions to be considered as the work of the Apostleⁿ.

REFLEXIONS.

IN reflecting upon the life of this Saint we may observe, that the circumstance of James, "the Lord's brother" or near kinsman, being one of his Apostles, gives a propriety and fitness to the appointment, inasmuch as it afforded opportunity for evidence to be borne to our Lord's character from a quarter, where accurate information was most likely to be procured. If there had been any thing in that character of a blameable or questionable kind, it must doubtless have been best known to those, who were

ⁿ Mr. Jones.

most intimately connected with him, and must have formed an insuperable obstacle to their uniting themselves with him, and becoming his instruments in the enterprise of converting the world to the profession of a new religion. But one of his Apostles was James, the son of Alphæus, "the Lord's brother;" another of them was "Judas, the brother of James," and therefore standing in the same relation to the Lord, as he. And it cannot with any shew of reason be supposed, that they would have followed him as disciples, or accepted his commission as Apostles, unless they had been persuaded of his piety and integrity, of the sincerity of his purpose, and the purity and guilelessness of his heart.

But whilst there is an evident fitness in these brethren of our Lord being chosen among his Apostles, there appears a fitness also in not many of them being thus chosen. Such a choice, if multiplied to a great extent, might have given to the preaching of the Gospel a semblance of compact and collusion, or have laid the character of its author open to a charge of undue partiality and predilection. On the contrary therefore, of the twelve Apostles it is remarkable that a considerable majority were not connected with our Lord by any tie of natural kindred; that probably two only were

so connected : and that even those two, though called to the Apostleship, were not treated by him with any peculiar distinction above the other Apostles, and certainly were not admitted to such a degree of his intimacy and confidence as he bestowed on some other members of the Apostolical body.

The excellent character of St. James has been noticed ; and the high esteem in which he was held, not by the Christian community only, but by unbelievers. The name of "the Just," which was commonly ascribed to him by many even during his life, is a proof of the opinion entertained of his virtue and integrity : he appears to have been equally remarkable for a well-tempered zeal, and for admirable moderation and discretion : enthusiasm and fanaticism were no more ingredients in the composition of his mind, than falsehood and dishonesty : so that his profession of the Christian faith during life, and his martyrdom to the Messiahship of Jesus, can only be accounted for on the ground of his deliberate and sincere persuasion of the truth of those pretensions, of which as "the Lord's brother," and subsequently as the Apostle of the Lord, he had the most ample means of forming a correct judgment.

In his conduct, as Bishop of Jerusalem, he

appears to have fully justified the choice of those, who placed him in that station of honourable eminence, and thus authorized him to take the lead in the councils and judgment of the primitive Christian Church. In the same course he persevered to the hour of his death, when he laid down his life in testimony of the truth of Jesus, and in the act of praying and pleading for his murderers; thus exhibiting a bright example of the value of the principles which he had inculcated in his teaching; of those Christian graces, which, according to the tenour of his Epistle, are the surest evidence, the constant accompaniment, the fairest ornament, the only infallible criterion, the very crown and perfection, of a true Christian faith. At the same time the fact of our Apostle's elevation to the episcopal seat of Jerusalem is matter of no slight interest and importance to the whole Church in subsequent ages. Jerusalem was the metropolis of Christendom; the Church of Jerusalem was the mother of all Christian Churches; it was thence that "the word of the Lord sounded forth" unto the uttermost part of the earth: of that Church, by the choice probably of Peter, and other Apostles, with the concurrence surely and approbation of all, under the providence of the divine Founder, St. James was appointed

Bishop : as such he presided in the council of " the Apostles and elders," and regulated their deliberations, no man gainsaying him : an unanswerable argument, as against any other Church of Christendom claiming to herself the character of the mother of all Churches, so against the Bishop of any other Church, by virtue of a supposed succession from any other Apostle, arrogating to himself any spiritual authority or pre-eminence over the rest of the Christian world.

Collects.

" O ALMIGHTY God, whom truly to know is everlasting life ; Grant us perfectly to know thy Son Jesus Christ to be the way, the truth, and the life ; that, following the steps of thy holy Apostles, Saint Philip and Saint James, we may stedfastly walk in the way that leadeth to eternal life ; through the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen*°."

" ALMIGHTY God, who through thine only-begotten Son Jesus Christ hast overcome death, and opened unto us the gate of everlasting life : We humbly beseech thee, that, as by thy special grace preventing us thou dost put into our minds good desires, so by thy continual help we

° Collect for the day.

may bring the same to good effect; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. *Amen*^p."

"O SAVIOUR of the world, who by thy cross and precious blood hast redeemed us, save us and help us, we humbly beseech thee, O Lord^q."

^p Collect for Easter.

^q From the Order for the Visitation of the Sick.



Holy JESUS, Saviour blest,
As, by passion strong posscest,
Through this world of sin we stray,
Thou to guide us art the WAY.

Holy JESUS, when the night
Of error blinds our clouded sight,
Round the cheering day to throw,
Saviour, then the TRUTH art thou.

Holy JESUS, when our pow'r
Fails us in temptation's hour,
All unequal to the strife;
Thou to aid us art the LIFE.

Who would reach his heavenly home;
Who would to the Father come;
Who the Father's presence see;
JESUS, he must come by thee.

286 Philip....and James the son of Alphæus.

**Channel of the Father's grace,
Image of the Father's face,
Saviour blest, incarnate Son,
With the Father thou art one,**

ST. BARNABAS.

Joses, who by the Apostles was surnamed Barnabas.

ACTS iv. 36.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE OF ST. BARNABAS.

THE festival of this day, having been omitted in the former editions of the Common Prayer, was added to the Calendar by the last Revisers in 1661: and with reason; for St. Barnabas, who is commemorated on this day, was not only “a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith^a,” but, as the Church describes him in the language of holy writ, an Apostle also: not an Apostle, as were the twelve, originally called and ordained to their apostleship by the Lord Jesus Christ in his own person upon earth; nor as Matthias, who, after the fall of Judas, was chosen by the Lord’s appointment to supply the vacancy, and was

^a Acts xi. 24.

thus numbered with the eleven; nor altogether as St. Paul, who also was chosen by our Lord himself that in due time he might fill the office of an Apostle: but nevertheless in some sort as St. Paul, together with whom he was "separated to the Holy Ghost," at his own express commandment, by the laying on of the hands of "certain prophets and teachers in the church, for the work whereunto he had called them," and was thus "sent forth by him" to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles. Therefore the Church has deservedly appointed a day for the commemoration of St. Barnabas, as well as for that of St. Paul, the celebration of whose conversion was likewise provided for at the last revision of the Liturgy.

St. Barnabas was by birth a Jew; "a Levite of the country of Cyprus^b," which was an island in the Mediterranean Sea, not far from Syria to the east, and Cilicia to the north. In that fruitful country his parents appear to have been settled, and to have acquired property, such as by the Jewish law they were not intitled to possess in their own land. They are said to have provided for the education of their son by sending him to Jerusalem, there to be trained up in the knowledge of the law at the

^b Acts iv. 36.

feet of the famous Gamaliel : and it has been surmised, not without apparent probability, though neither the sacred history, nor perhaps any authentick ecclesiastical writer, gives authority for the surmise, that, when under Gamaliel's tuition, he laid the foundation of that intimacy with St. Paul, also a disciple of the same master, which subsisted so long between them in a later period of their lives^c.

The time of his conversion to Christianity is not known. According to the positive testimony of many ancient writers, he was one of the seventy disciples whom our Lord sent forth to preach. Certain it is from the Acts of the Apostles, that soon after our Lord's ascension he was amongst the disciples at Jerusalem: for then it was, that to assist in supplying the wants of the more indigent members of the Church, he "sold the land" which he possessed, probably his patrimonial estate in Cyprus; "and brought the money, and laid it at the Apostles' feet^d."

This is the first occasion of his being mentioned in the sacred history, which there describes him as "Joses, who by the Apostles was surnamed Barnabas, which is, being interpreted, the Son of consolation." His proper and original name was Joses, by a softer termi-

^c Dr. Cave, Dr. Lardner.

^d Acts iv. 36, 37.

nation familiar with the Greeks for Joseph, which, as a Jew, he doubtless received at his admittance by circumcision into the Jewish covenant. To this name, after he had embraced Christianity, the Apostles added that of Barnabas, denoting, as the sacred text interprets it, "the Son of consolation:" an honourable appellation, whether conferred upon him, as Chrysostom intimates, generally in indication of his virtue, and of his peculiar qualifications and ability for administering comfort to the afflicted; or more especially with a view to that noble example of disinterestedness and generosity, which he set upon the occasion whereupon the addition of this name is recorded, and whereupon it probably was actually added*.

After this occurrence we have for some time no account of Barnabas, who however in all probability, during the dispersion of the Church which followed the martyrdom of St. Stephen, remained with the Apostles at Jerusalem; where some of his relations seem to have resided, and to have been in repute with the Church, as in the course of the history we learn to have been the case with his sister Mary, at whose house the Christians were wont to assemble for their religious exercises; and whose son John, surnamed

* Dr. Cave.

Mark, nephew to Barnabas, became afterwards celebrated, as in conformity with the opinion of many learned men we have lately considered him, in the character of St. Mark the Evangelist.

But whatever may have been the intermediate residence of Barnabas, the next transaction in which we learn of his being engaged took place at Jerusalem in connexion with St. Paul, who, as some think, had been formerly acquainted with him, or, in the opinion of others, now met with Barnabas, and found an opportunity of giving him an account of his conversion and of the subsequent events^f: and from henceforth the history of St. Barnabas is closely connected with that of St. Paul.

In the ninth chapter of the Acts we find these two holy men first mentioned together, on occasion of St. Paul's first journey to Jerusalem about three years after his conversion: when the disciples, who had previously known his hostility to the Church, avoiding all communication with him, for "they were afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple," there-upon "Barnabas took him and brought him to the Apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had

^f Dr. Lardner.

spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem."

In the eleventh chapter we are informed, that Barnabas, having been deputed by the Apostles at Jerusalem to visit and confirm the Church recently established at Antioch in Syria, was desirous of Paul's co-operation, whom he accordingly brought from Tarsus for the purpose: and that they continued there together promoting the knowledge and belief of the Gospel, "assembling themselves a whole year with the Church, and teaching much people" at Antioch, whence they were at length dispatched by the disciples of those parts to convey relief during a time of dearth to the distressed Christians of Judea.

In the thirteenth chapter we find them, when they had fulfilled their charitable ministry, returned again from Jerusalem to Antioch, when by a special commission of the Holy Ghost they were separated by the prophets and teachers of the Church "for the work whereunto he had called them," and thus duly invested with the Apostleship: and in the course of that and of the following chapter a compendious recital is given of their departure from Antioch agreeably to their commission, and of their journey

through many of the countries, and their visits to many of the cities, of Asia; during which we find them "going together into the synagogues," and "publishing the word of the Lord throughout those regions;" "confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them and persuading them to continue in the faith and in the grace of God;" "opening the door of faith unto the Gentiles," and "converting great multitudes both of the Jews and also of the Greeks;" "confirming their word by miracles, and signs, and wonders," which "the Lord granted to be done by their hands;" "ordaining elders in every church" for its due government under their episcopal authority; "hazarding their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;" and at last returning to Antioch, "from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they had fulfilled," and where "they abode a long time with the disciples."

In the fifteenth chapter we find them again associated in an affair of great interest and moment to the infant church; when, on occasion of a question started by some of the Jewish converts concerning the subserviency of Christians to the Mosaick law, the same two Apostles were delegated by the brethren at Antioch to go up to Jerusalem, and to consult the rest of the

Apostles and the elders on the question; whence they returned with a sentence corroborative of the judgment which they had themselves previously supported, and redounding greatly to the consolation and joy of those to whom it was delivered. Their return is succeeded by the observation, that "Paul and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord."

The period, which had elapsed between the earliest occurrence noticed in the intercourse of these Apostles with each other, and the point in their history at which we are now arrived, was about sixteen years: and during the whole of this time we enjoy the delightful prospect of two Christian brethren, servants of God, and ministers of the Church of Christ, dwelling together in unity, taking sweet counsel together, and walking in the house of God as friends. That any event should have arisen to interrupt their harmony and terminate their intercourse, was perhaps as little to be anticipated, as it is painful to reflect that such an event did actually occur. Upon the suggestion of St. Paul, they were now about to undertake another journey in furtherance of their former pious and charitable efforts for the establishment of the Christian faith, when an unhappy circumstance intervened which led to their disagreement and

separation. At the end of the twelfth chapter it is related, that on their return from Jerusalem to Antioch, after "they had fulfilled their ministry" of conveying relief to the poor brethren of Judea, they "took with them John, whose surname was Mark." In the commencement of their journey, related in the thirteenth chapter, the same John accompanied them: but instead of continuing with them throughout their travels, he quitted them, when they were not far advanced, at Perga in Pamphylia, "and returned to Jerusalem" for some reason, which the sacred historian leaves us to conjecture, giving us no further information concerning it than that it was not sufficient to satisfy St. Paul. For when they were now proceeding to visit the churches which they had founded on their former journey, and "Barnabas determined to take with them John whose surname was Mark," probably actuated by a feeling of natural affection towards him, for he was "sister's son to Barnabas," "Paul thought not good to take him with them," upon the ground that he had "departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work. And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cy-

prus; and Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God. And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches."

What ensued between them, or whether their intercourse was subsequently renewed, we have not any scriptural, nor any ecclesiastical authority for affirming. There cannot however be a doubt, that however sharp was their contention at the time, and whatever separation resulted from it, they experienced no permanent separation of their minds and affections. In the first Epistle to the Corinthians, written some time after this occurrence, St. Paul thus contends for his privilege as an Apostle to receive a free maintenance from his converts: "Have we not power to eat and to drink? Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other Apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas? Or I only and Barnabas, have not we power to forbear working?" These questions appear to imply, not only a community of interests, but also a feeling of benevolence and kindness in St. Paul towards the person, whose rights he thus identifies with his own. And all the information which we possess concerning St. Barnabas, who is emphatically known to us as "the Son of conso-

lation," may convince us, that he would not be backward in cherishing the like feelings of reciprocal kindness and good will.

With any particular testimonies however of these feelings on the part of Barnabas, as well with any other circumstances in the sequel of his history, the Scriptures do not make us acquainted. The ecclesiastical writers also throw but little light on the remainder of his life: nor can reliance be placed on the Acts, which go under the name of Mark, nor upon the life of Barnabas written by a monk of Alexandria^c. Some writers report him to have travelled into Egypt; others into Italy, and to have preached the Gospel at Rome, and founded a Church at Milan^b. It is probable, however, that in a later period of his life he returned to Cyprus: and that he was there stoned to death by the Jews of Salamis, and buried by his kinsman Mark in a cave not far distant from that city. The miracles reported to have been wrought at his tomb; and subsequently, the discovery of his remains, in consequence of three apparitions of the Saint himself in the year 485, when St. Matthew's Gospel, written in Hebrew by Barnabas's own hands, is said to have been found lying upon his breast; may be well ranked

^c Calmet.

^b Mr. Nelson.

among the tales of a fond superstition or a daring imposture: notwithstanding the Emperor Zeno, as a testimony of his joy at the discovery, honoured the see of Salamis with the privilege of being independent of any patriarchal jurisdiction: a privilege, afterward ratified by the Emperor Justinian, whose wife Theodora was a Cypriotⁱ.

An Epistle is still extant under the name of Barnabas, which has been cited as his by several of the ancients, whilst others have pronounced it spurious. The opinions of learned men among the moderns also have been much divided as to its genuineness. Certainly it has never been received as inspired, nor admitted by the Church into the Canon of Scripture. But, whoever was the author, it is acknowledged to be of high antiquity, and to have been written soon after the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus; most probably in the year of our Lord 71 or 72: a circumstance, which has been considered by Archbishop Laud and some other of the opponents of its genuineness as a conclusive argument against the supposition of its having been written by Barnabas, whom there are strong grounds for believing to have been dead before that event^k. The

ⁱ Dr. Cave.

^k Mr. Jones.

Epistle consists of two parts: the first is an exhortation and argument to constancy in the belief and profession of the Christian doctrine; particularly the simplicity of it, without the rites of the Jewish law: the second part contains moral instructions. Its structure is intricate and obscure, and its style highly allegorical¹. It was originally written in Greek: but parts of it, which are wanting in the copies now extant in that language, are supplied by an old Latin version. A translation of it into English was published in the beginning of the last century by Archbishop Wake, together with other Epistles of the Apostolical Fathers.

REFLEXIONS.

THE particulars in the character of St. Barnabas, which have now been passing under our view, shew him to have been possessed of a disinterested and noble generosity, in relinquishing his own possessions, and in sacrificing his personal ease, for the benefit of his brethren; of candour, ingenuousness, and liberality, in removing from the minds of the Apostles their prepossessions against St. Paul, and in afterwards seeking him out and uniting him with himself as his associate in the ministry;

¹ Dr. Cave, Dr. Lardner.

and of a ready conformity to the divine will, which separated and sent him forth to the work of an Apostle, and of faithfulness, diligence, activity, and courage in performing his commission: so that the Church with reason commemorates him in the Collect for the day, as one whom "Almighty God endued with singular gifts of the Holy Ghost;" agreeably to the testimony borne to his character by the Evangelist, that "he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith."

Various reflexions would readily arise from these different qualities and acts of our Apostle: but passing by these, we will rather advert to that occurrence, which closes his history in the Acts; namely the contention and separation between him and St. Paul, after their long and cordial co-operation in the ministry, as an occurrence of a peculiar nature, and calculated to suggest remarks singularly conducive to our instruction and improvement. No judgment is intimated by the historian concerning their separation; but considering that they had long been associated in their ministry, that they were on the point of proceeding together in the further execution of the duties of it, and that they were prevented from carrying their purpose into effect by the sharpness of the contention between them; it is reasonable to under-

stand, as indeed hath been usually understood, that the conduct of one or both of them was reprehensible: that Barnabas ought not to have "determined to take with them" a person who had before "departed from them," supposing his departure to have been unjustifiable; or that Paul ought not to have refused the re-admission of him into their company, supposing a sufficient cause to have existed for his departure; or that in any case they should both have conducted the dispute with that temper and conciliatory spirit, which might have enabled them to persevere with mutual goodwill and co-operation in a work, in which they had before been so happily associated. An unbecoming degree of pertinacity and irritation in one or both of them seems to have produced that consequence, which a due degree of concession or moderation in one or both might have prevented from occurring. Upon this view of the subject our succeeding reflexions will proceed.

In the first place, then, we may notice the admirable frankness of the sacred writers as to the manner in which they communicate information to the world: desirous, as it should seem, of giving a correct exposition of the facts, which they "have taken in hand to set forth," and in-

different to the appearance, which their exposition might have with the reader.

It might for instance have been thought more creditable to the new religion, more calculated to recommend it in the estimation of strangers, and of course to ensure its success in the world, had the historians of it concealed the defects of those by whom it was first professed and preached. The denial of Peter, the disbelief of Thomas, the doubts of the other Apostles, the worldly views and ambitious projects of the twelve, especially of James and John, had a natural tendency to reflect dishonour on the religion, the propagation of which was intrusted to them by their Lord. A similar effect was likely to be produced by the differences, which prevailed amongst some of the Apostles as to their conduct in relation to the question between the Jewish and Gentile converts concerning the obligation of the Mosaick law, when, as St. Paul says to the Galatians, he "withstood Peter to the face because he was to be blamed." A similar effect again might have been apprehended from the disagreement, the contention, and consequent division between Paul and Barnabas upon the occasion before us.

Now with a very natural and laudable feel-

ing for the honour of their religion, it might have been expected that the sacred writers would be anxious to keep such matters as these out of sight; not by falsifying their history indeed, but by a prudent and politick silence upon occurrences which might probably contribute to the injury of their cause. Thus in the present instance St. Luke might have omitted to state distinctly and in terms, that Paul and Barnabas “departed asunder one from the other;” or contenting himself with a bare statement of the fact, he might have omitted to declare expressly, that a “sharp contention between them” was the cause.

But the sacred writers did not, if the expression may be allowed, write for effect. Having, as St. Luke declares of himself at the commencement of his Gospel, “had perfect understanding of all things from the very first,” they seem to have gone fairly and honestly to work, “writing in order” their simple narratives with no other object than that of giving an undissembled representation of actual events. To the candid reader their simplicity is most valuable, and productive of the best possible consequence; for it affords him the most convincing testimony and the strongest assurance, of their sincerity, fidelity, and invariable attachment to the truth.

Secondly, it may be observed, that by giving

this inartificial exposition of real occurrences, illustrative as they evidently are of the characters of the persons concerned in them, instead of attempting a romantick exhibition of perfect and unmixed goodness, the sacred writers assist in leading us to form correct views of human nature.

We read in the fourteenth chapter of the Acts, that, in their journey through the provinces of Asia, our two Apostles had so recommended themselves by their eloquence and miracles to the people of Lystra in Lycaonia, that they would fain have done sacrifice unto them, crying out, "The gods are come down unto us in the likeness of men." The Apostles "scarce restrained" them by expostulating and declaring, "Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you." That they were "men of like passions" with other men, appears from the infirmities, from which in common with others they were not exempted.

Of one person alone do the holy Scriptures present us with an unblemished and perfect character; namely, of Him, "to whom the Spirit was given without measure," and "in whom dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily:" he alone could say confidently to his enemies, with reference to the intire course of his unsullied life, "Which of you convinceth me of

sin?" Of him alone could it be affirmed without exception or qualification, that he "left us an example, that we should in all things follow his steps, who did no sin." With respect to his Apostles, and the other worthies both of the Old and of the New Testament, St. James has pronounced, "in many things we offend all." And St. John has confirmed the sentiment, with a severe censure on the self-delusion and falsehood of those, who maintain the contrary profession, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

Well therefore does the Church direct all and each of the members of her congregations, repeatedly to beseech our heavenly Father in the words which our Lord has taught us, that he will "forgive us our trespasses:" well does she direct us all, even the very best of us, to humble ourselves daily "before the throne of the heavenly grace" with the penitent confession that we are "miserable offenders;" to supplicate daily for the protection of Almighty God, that "we fall into no sin, but that all our doings may be ordered by his governance, to do always that is righteous in his sight;" and after all continually to ask of him, "whose nature and property is ever to have mercy and to forgive," that "though we be tied and bound with the chain of our sins, yet" he would "let the pitifulness

of his great mercy loose us, for the honour of Jesus Christ, our Mediator and Advocate."

But the quality of the persons, whose conduct has given occasion to our reflexions, and their character, both for moral excellence, and for spiritual endowments, may lead us to insist somewhat more particularly on the present point.

St. Paul has affirmed concerning himself, and the general tenour of his life and conversation is our warrant in giving credit to the affirmation, that "herein did he exercise himself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men." Of St. Barnabas the author of the Acts of the Apostles has borne testimony, and the particulars recorded of his previous and subsequent conduct are in unison with the testimony, that "he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith." Both of them therefore were men of distinguished moral excellence, which they manifested by their indefatigable labours for the glory of God, and the salvation of their fellow creatures, sparing themselves no trouble, and even "hazarding their lives, for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Both of them were likewise endowed with eminent spiritual gifts. Separated by the special designation of the Holy Ghost "for the work whereunto he had called them," they were

successful in fulfilling the work to which they had been appointed, and "in opening the door of faith unto the Gentiles, speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be wrought by their hands." Yet of men, thus honourably and virtuously distinguished, we find one or both, upon the present occasion, guilty of reprehensible vehemence of temper, which resulted in an unbecoming separation from each other's society in the propagation and establishment of the Gospel.

The inference may be profitable to different persons amongst us, however they may be distinguished amongst themselves by characters very different from one another. Are we inclined to think highly of ourselves, and to cherish presumptuous imaginations, by reason of any intellectual or moral superiority, or of any excellence of spiritual qualifications, to which we may imagine ourselves to have attained? That we may not "be exalted above measure through the abundance" of our gifts or our graces, let us cast our eyes upon these Apostles, men doubtless more gifted and most probably not less virtuous than we; let us consider at the same time that they were "men of like passions with" their fellow-creatures, and like their fellow-creatures therefore subject to

human infirmities : and let this consideration draw us on to ponder our own passions, to examine our own infirmities, to form a more sober estimate of our own merits and value, to quicken our diligence in "working out our salvation with fear and trembling," and so to "walk humbly with our God."

Are we on the contrary disposed to sink under excessive timidity of spirit, to be weighed down by the consciousness of our manifold deficiencies, and to despond from a lowly contemplation of our spiritual state, notwithstanding we may be anxious, to the best of our power, to serve God and keep his commandments? Let the remembrance of the infirmities of the greatest saints of God minister refreshment and consolation to our soul: let us recollect that frailty will be in various degrees the lot and portion of man, until "this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality:" let us recollect that the strength of God is made perfect in human weakness, and that he is faithful, who will not suffer his sincere worshippers "to be tempted above that they are able;" whilst we cherish therefore a salutary apprehension of his justice, let us support ourselves on the assurance of his mercy; let us "acquaint ourselves with him, and be at peace."

But farther; the particular circumstances of the case may be of use in placing us on our guard against that kind of conduct, which appears reprehensible in these holy men. On the occasion of their dispute, so transiently and with such slight circumstances as it is mentioned in the history, there is some difficulty in forming a decided opinion. It has indeed been ingeniously remarked, that "when Barnabas, probably from a natural affection for his kinsman Mark, wished to take him with them, Paul, actuated by his honest zeal for propagating the faith, thought it not right to employ a man upon whose steadiness he could not rely:" that therefore, "if we were to decide upon the merits of each conduct, St. Paul's principle appears the more just and pure; yet surely it may be thought a weakness of an amiable kind in Barnabas, to be so ready in pardoning his friend, and hoping better things from him in time to come: so that, although we may lament any occasion of difference between them, as well as their pursuing it with too much heat and anger, it is pleasing to think, that the contest was rather between virtuous affections, carried on one side to excess, than between any mean or selfish passions on either part."

The suggestion with respect to the origin of the dispute is consolatory. But however this may have been, the dispute having arisen, there

appears to have been improper vehemence in the conduct of it: "the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder the one from the other." It was the observation of the wise king many ages since, "a soft answer turneth away wrath, but grievous words stir up anger." Daily experience confirms the justness of the observation. Probably the latter member of it may have been confirmed by the unhappy issue of the debate on the present occasion: probably the former member would have been confirmed by a different issue, had the dispute been conducted with circumstances of less irritation. The language of the sacred historian appears to be our warrant for supposing, that, had "the contention" been less "sharp" between the conflicting parties, they might not have "departed asunder one from the other;" but might have gone again, and visited together, and together confirmed the churches, which together they had planted and watered, to the mutual joy and consolation and support of each other, as well as to the general edification of the brethren at large.

Let a result, so little to have been expected, and so much to be deplored, in men situated as were the Apostles, be an admonition to us in our familiar and social intercourse. Reciprocal concessions with respect to the subjects on

which we differ, so far as such concessions may be compatible with a conscientious sense of what our duty requires of us, may often prevent consequences injurious to the interests of Christian charity and brotherly love. Mildness in maintaining our own opinions, where consistently with a sense of duty we cannot recede from them, may often produce the same salutary effect. And surely in this our earthly state of imperfection and infirmity, there is inquietude enough to which we must be subject, without multiplying the occasions of it unnecessarily, or aggravating that, which with all our care we may not be able to avoid. After the journeyings, the fatigues, the perils, the works and labours of love, the hazarding of their lives for the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, which Paul and Barnabas had encountered together for the space of about sixteen years, who would have anticipated any material disagreement, who would have anticipated a "sharp contention," between them? who would have expected to see them "depart asunder one from the other" in consequence of such disagreement and contention? But, as the wise king saith again, "The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water," pregnant with danger, and impatient of control: therefore, as he adds, let us "leave off contention before it be meddled with;" and as a means thereto, let us,

as St. Peter exhorts, "have fervent charity among ourselves," let us "seek peace, and ensue it."

It only remains to be observed, that notwithstanding the regret which must naturally be experienced on occasion of this difference, there are still some circumstances belonging to it calculated to diminish that regret.

One of these has been already suggested; namely, that the dispute appears to have arisen from virtuous affections; on the part of St. Barnabas, from a feeling of kindness and humanity; from a sense of justice and an extreme anxiety to propagate the Christian faith, on the part of St. Paul. Besides, that St. Paul was probably actuated in some degree by a desire to convince Mark of the culpable indifference in the work of the Gospel, of which in St. Paul's judgment he had been guilty; and so to produce in him better resolutions, and a more steady and consistent conduct for the future. Accordingly no lasting animosity prevailed amongst the parties: for although we have no certain intelligence concerning the subsequent proceedings of Barnabas, we have sufficient reason to be persuaded that a perfect reconciliation took place between the other persons concerned in the dispute; for that Mark afterwards again became a "fellow-labourer" of St. Paul, and "a fellow-worker with him unto

the kingdom of God ;” and was “ profitable unto him for the ministry,” and “ a comfort to him” in his afflictions and bonds.

Add to all these considerations one other of material moment ; that during the very height of their contention, when the Apostles “ departed asunder one from the other,” their division was not a schism, according to the scriptural and ecclesiastical sense of the term ; it was not a religious separation. Differing as they did in opinion upon the expediency or propriety of admitting a particular person into their company on a particular journey, they had not a shadow of a difference upon the object of that journey. Perceiving therefore that they could not satisfactorily go together again to the same places, “ and visit the brethren in every city where they had preached the word of the Lord,” they visited them apart, apparently having come to some previous understanding and arrangement on the subject ; and “ Barnabas sailed unto Cyprus,” and “ Paul went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches.” And there doubtless in their respective departments, each by himself, they preached the same word of God, the same faith in Christ, the same doctrine of justification and forgiveness of sins, in a word, the same Gospel which they had formerly preached ;

and ordained in every church the same orders of ministers, which they had formerly ordained; when at first by their united endeavours they "opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles," and "fulfilled the work for which they had been separated by the Holy Ghost."

Such are among the more pleasing circumstances which belong to the portion of the history of these two holy men, to which our thoughts have been now directed. And as from the more painful, so also from the more agreeable, circumstances of the case, we may derive matter of useful practical application. They may teach us, if ever we are so unhappy as to be engaged in dissention with others, to take heed to our motives, that they be equitable and humane: they may teach us, in all our disputes, to have an eye to the instruction, correction, and improvement of those who may be the occasion of them: they may teach us, to reconcile ourselves unto those, with whom we are at variance, as speedily as possible, making them, as far as we are able, our fellow-workers, and fellow-labourers in doing good: finally they may teach us, whatever be the cause of our difference with others, not to suffer that difference to operate upon us in the exercise of our Christian profession, not to let it divert us from an unanimous acknowledgment of the

Christian faith, nor withdraw us from an united observance of Christian discipline; but although we may differ upon questions of expediency, or fitness, or other points of subordinate importance, still to believe the same doctrine of the Lord, to adhere to the same worship, to listen to the same word of exhortation, to practise the same means of grace, and to cherish the same hope of salvation and eternal life.

Upon the whole, whatever supernatural powers were communicated to the Apostles by the extraordinary influence of the Holy Ghost, or whatever moral improvement they were enabled to attain by the operation of his ordinary grace, they still continued to be "men of like passions" with other men; they still continued to be moral and responsible agents, and of course to be possessed of liberty of will and of action. Happily by God's grace they trod for the most part in the right way: occasionally however they appear to have deviated from it. As their virtues are recorded for our example, so are their frailties for our admonition. Free agents as they were, and blessed at the same time with a competent portion of the grace of God, be it our care to imitate their virtues, and to avoid their defects. After all imperfection will still be found in the very best of us. But the more earnest are our endea-

vours after perfection, the more complete will be our success ; and the brighter will ultimately be our crown of glory in that day, when “ the Lord of hosts shall make up his jewels^m ; ” when “ death shall be swallowed up in victoryⁿ , ” and corruption shall cease with the passions that nourish it, and “ the spirits of just men shall be made perfect^o . ”

Collects.

“ ^p O LORD God Almighty, who didst endue thy holy Apostle Barnabas with singular gifts of the Holy Ghost ; leave us not, we beseech thee, destitute of thy manifold gifts, nor yet of grace to use them alway to thy honour and glory ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.* ”

“ ^q ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, give unto us the increase of faith, hope, and charity : and that we may obtain that which thou dost promise, make us to love that which thou dost command ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.* ”

“ ^r GOD, who didst teach the hearts of thy faithful people by sending to them the light of thy Holy Spirit ; Grant us by the same Spirit to

^m Mal. iii. 17.

ⁿ 1 Cor. xv. 54.

^o Heb. xii. 23.

^p Collect for the day.
after Trinity.

^q Collect for the 14th Sunday

^r Collect for Whitsunday.

have a right judgment in all things, and evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort, through the merits of Christ Jesus our Saviour, who liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the same Spirit, one God, world without end. *Amen.*"

" COME, Holy Ghost, my soul inspire !"
Spirit of the Almighty Sire,
Spirit of the Son divine,
Comforter, thy gifts be mine !

Holy Spirit, in my breast
Grant that lively *faith* may rest,
And subdue each rebel thought
To believe what thou hast taught !

When around my sinking soul
Gathering waves of sorrow roll,
Spirit blest, the tempest still,
And with *hope* my bosom fill !

Holy Spirit, from my mind
Thought, and wish, and will unkind,
Deed and word unkind remove,
And my bosom fill with *love* !

Faith and hope and charity,
Comforter, descend from thee.
"Thou th' anointing Spirit art :"
These thy gifts to us impart ;

318 ***Joses, who by the Apostles, &c.***

**Till our faith be lost in sight,
Hope be swallowed in delight,
And love return to dwell with thee,
In the threefold Deity !**

ST. JOHN BAPTIST.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

JOHN i. 6.

PROPHETICAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST.

“**THERE** was a man sent from God, whose name was John:” that is, not John the Apostle and Evangelist, the beloved disciple of our Lord, from whose Gospel the description is taken: but John the Baptist, our Lord’s messenger and forerunner, that “burning and shining light,” whom the Church commemorates this day; called, according to the special appointment of God, by the name of John, as an intimation probably of that divine grace and favour which eminently distinguished his mission; such being the meaning of the word^a; and further denominated “the Baptist,” because it was by baptism, a rite previously indeed prac-

^a Bp. Horne, Dr. Doddridge.

tised by the Jews, but by him first used to figure out to them repentance and remission of sins, that he admitted disciples to a profession of his doctrine^b.

It is worthy of our observation, that whereas the other Saints are commemorated on the supposed day of their respective deaths, the day chosen for the commemoration of John the Baptist is that of his nativity; this being the only nativity, besides that of our blessed Saviour, for which the Church assembles with thanksgiving^c. The reason of this is obvious. It was by the nativity of the Baptist that the providence of Almighty God was most wonderfully shewn; in the foretelling of that event by ancient prophecies, in its announcement by an angel before the conception of the child, in the preternatural character of the event itself, lastly in the appearance of the Baptist as the forerunner and harbinger of our Lord. The Saints of the Church in general were martyrs or witnesses to the Christian truth by their deaths: the Baptist bore his witness in the most memorable manner by his birth. And although he may doubtless be said to have suffered martyrdom, and to have glorified God by his death, for he suffered and died "for the truth's sake,"

^b Mr. Nelson.

^c Dean Stanhope.

yet he cannot be said to have suffered and died specially for the Christian truth; and therefore his death would have been commemorated in the Christian Church with less propriety than his birth, which is a direct and most manifest attestation to the "Author and Finisher of our faith." Hence it is, as observed by an ancient father^d, "that the Church goes out of her usual method, and pays a particular respect to the first setting out of this wonderful forerunner." And thus by keeping this festival she affords a perpetual comment on the declaration of the angel, that "many shall rejoice at his birth^e."

The mission of John the Baptist forms the connecting link between the Old and New Testaments. The volume of prophecy, and therewith the volume of the Old Testament, was closed with two memorable predictions of Malachi about 400 years before the Christian era.

Of these the former is contained in his third chapter, and runs in this wise: "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight

^d St. Augustin, quoted by Dean Stanhope. ^e Luke i. 14.

in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts." And this prediction probably bears allusion, as it certainly bears resemblance, to a former one of Isaiah, "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it:" expressions these, which have evident reference to a custom that prevailed in eastern countries, of sending messengers and pioneers to make the ways level and straight before monarchs on their progress. They literally lowered mountains, they raised valleys, they cut down woods, they removed all obstacles, they cleared away all roughnesses and inequalities, and made straight, short, and commodious highways through places impassable before, for the great personages whom they preceded.

The latter prediction of Malachi, just alluded to, or rather the latter part of the same prediction, is contained in the last verse of his last chapter; where, speaking again of the mes-

senger who should precede the Lord, he describes him under an appellation familiar to the Jews; the appellation, namely, of Elijah, one of their greatest prophets in former times. "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."

Thus closes the volume of the Old Testament. The volume of the New Testament opens with a history of the events, which compose the fulfilment of these predictions by the mission of John.

The first words of St. Mark's Gospel, which commences with a narrative of the Baptist's office and ministry, declare the fulfilment of the two first predictions in his person. "The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God: as it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins."

The approaching fulfilment of the other pre-

diction is declared by the angel in the first chapter of St. Luke's Gospel, in announcing to the father of the Baptist the wonderful and preternatural birth of the promised child. "Fear not, Zacharias," said the heavenly messenger; "for thy prayer is heard, and thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

Several characteristick and peculiar traits, we may perceive, were to distinguish the child promised in these words by the angel. Not his parents alone, but many other persons likewise, were to "rejoice at his birth:" a circumstance, which marked him for a man of no common importance. He was to "drink neither wine nor strong drink:" that is, he was to be noted for the strictness and abstinence of his life, as a man set apart, like the ancient Nazarites, for

the service of God. He was to be "great in the sight of the Lord;" he was to be "filled with the Holy Ghost" from his earliest years; and he was to "turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God:" all of which circumstances are of such a nature, as to give a high and very significant character to the man, in whom they should be found united. Especially, and this is the circumstance to which our attention is in particular to be directed, he was to "go before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

Here we must observe a very strong resemblance between the prediction of Malachi concerning "the coming of Elijah to prepare the way of the Lord," and the promise of the angel to Zacharias concerning his son, who was to "go before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elias." Indeed that the angel spake with a view to the prediction of Malachi, there cannot be a doubt. And we shall soon see how accurately both the one and the other delineated the character of John the Baptist.

Now Elias or Elijah (for the former name which occurs in the New Testament is the Greek method of writing the latter, which, as

being the Hebrew name, is retained in our translation of the Old Testament,) was one of the most celebrated of the Jewish prophets, and was esteemed by the Jews as inferior to no one but Moses. He had been raised up by God amongst his countrymen, when they were in a state of great degeneracy and corruption. And on a reference to his history in the books of Kings we find, that in the performance of the office, which God commissioned him to fill, he was conspicuous for the plainness of his appearance, for the severity of his manners, for very ardent zeal, and indefatigable activity ; and in particular, that, when he was persecuted by Ahab king of Israel for his devotion to the true religion, he feared not to rebuke the idolatrous monarch for his impiety and wickedness, and to assert the honour of Almighty God.

Such was the character of Elijah : and such of course was the character, that was to be maintained by that person, who should appear as the forerunner of the Lord : and such was actually the character of John the Baptist. Indeed history will furnish us with examples of very few persons, who have resembled each other in so many striking particulars as Elijah and St. John.

Elijah frequently lived in a state of retirement and seclusion from the world : the greatest

part of the life of John the Baptist was passed in the wilderness. Elijah appears to have been abstinent in his food and manner of living: John the Baptist drank neither wine nor strong drink; and "his meat was locusts and wild honey," such coarse and common food as the wilderness supplied to its meanest inhabitants. Elijah is described as "an hairy man," that is, as wearing a coarse garment of hair, with a girdle of leather about his loins: John the Baptist "had a raiment of camel's hair, with a leathern girdle about his loins."

Thus did they resemble each other, even in their manner of living and in their personal appearance; nor less in the nature of their ministry, and in the character of their minds. Elijah was distinguished by the respect and veneration which were manifested towards him above all the other prophets of his age: to the high estimation, which was attached to the character of John the Baptist, we have not only the testimony of the multitudes who flocked around him, and of Herod who put him to death; but also the declaration of our Lord himself, that "among them that are born of women, there had not arisen a greater than John the Baptist." Elijah was inferior in performances and qualifications to none but Moses, the great prophet and lawgiver of the Jews:

John the Baptist was "a prophet, and more than a prophet." An abundant portion of the Spirit rested upon Elijah: John the Baptist was "filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb." Elijah exerted himself to withdraw the Jews from the worship of idols to that of the true God: John the Baptist was no less earnest in persuading the descendants of the same Jews to forsake their sins, and prepare themselves by repentance and reformation for the coming of the Lord. Elijah was authorized to denounce speedy vengeance from heaven upon his perverse countrymen unless they repented: with the same authority John the Baptist denounced the like vengeance upon the impenitent. The persecutions of Ahab could not quench the ardour, or stifle the rebukes, of Elijah: so did not any alarm at the power and cruelty of Herod prevent John the Baptist from frankly rebuking him for his crimes. Elijah resisted the lawless proceedings of the idolatrous Jezebel, and was forced to flee for his life from her vindictive fury: John the Baptist endeavoured to interrupt the unprincipled and incestuous career of Herodias, and paid the forfeit of his life to the malice of the infuriated queen. Circumstances, such as these, unquestionably fix upon John the Baptist the prophet Malachi's description of "the messenger and

forerunner of the Lord," by shewing that he came, not indeed in the person, but, as the angel interpreted the prophet's language to Zacharias, "in the spirit and power," of Elijah.

When indeed the Jews inquired of him, whether he was Elias or Elijah, he answered, "I am not:" but this answer is not at all inconsistent with what has been now advanced concerning him, agreeably to our Lord's subsequent declaration, that he was Elias; in other words, that he was the person foretold by the prophet under that name and character. The Jews, misunderstanding the prediction of Malachi which foretold the coming of the Lord, and supposing that he was to come in power and majesty, to confer on the sons of Jacob dominion over the Gentiles, and make Jerusalem the metropolis of the world, expected that Elijah the Tishbite would in his own person return from heaven, as the Lord's messenger and forerunner.* In answer therefore to their question, John denied that he was that very Elijah, whose actions are recorded in the books of Kings; and whom, according to their erroneous interpretation of Scripture, the Jews supposed him to be. At the same time by his reply to their ensuing question, "Who art thou? What sayest thou of thy-

* John i. 21.

self?" he pointed out the way to a correct interpretation of the words, and in fact asserted to himself the character subsequently attributed to him by our Lord. "I am," said he, "the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias." The messenger of the Lord had been foretold by Isaiah and Malachi under different appellations, but with an identity of office and performances. By Isaiah he had been described as "the Voice of him that crieth in the wilderness;" by Malachi, as "Elijah the prophet;" by both, as engaged in the same employment of "preparing the way of the Lord." To assume one of these appellations was by consequence to assume the other: so that when John expressly affirmed of himself, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias;" it was in substance and effect, as if he had also affirmed, I am "the messenger of the Lord, sent to prepare the way before him," as said the prophet Malachi; the predicted Elijah, not in sameness of person indeed, as you erroneously expect him, but in similarity "of spirit and of power."

In this spirit and with this power and authority did the Baptist preach to the multitudes, who assembled from the surrounding country

to listen to his doctrine^h. To the different orders of men, who desired to be instructed by him, he gave such instructions as were best adapted to their several ways of life. He cautioned them against the temptations, to which their circumstances peculiarly exposed them; and he rebuked them for the sins, by which they were peculiarly beset. The Pharisees and Sadducees he admonished of their subtlety and craftiness, of the malignity and mischief of their principles; of the vanity of their self-sufficient reliance on their descent from holy Abraham, and of the danger of their own sinful and impenitent lives. He encouraged the people to be careful in their attention to the great duties of a benevolent and charitable life; duties, which he represented to be incumbent upon them, as well as upon the rich and great. Upon the publicans he charged the necessity of abstaining from exaction in the execution of the trust committed to them; and upon the soldiers that they should be content with their legal dues, and not increase them by the terrors of overbearing violence or of false accusations. In the mean time, to all in general he cried, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand:" "Repent, and bring forth fruits worthy of re-

^h Luke iii. 7—14.

pentance :” “ Repent, and believe the Gospel¹. ” In this manner did he turn many of the children of Israel unto the Lord their God ; for “ there went out unto him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.” And in this manner did he “ make ready a people, and prepare them for the Lord,” of whom he constantly declared that he was only the messenger and forerunner ; whom he described as far mightier and more noble than himself ; and for whom he endeavoured to prepare the way by “ exalting the valleys and making the mountains low, by making the crooked straight and the rough places plain ;” or by clearing away and removing the various obstructions which were likely to impede the progress of the Gospel, arising from the prejudices and the passions, the corrupt affections, and the sinful habits of mankind.

REFLEXIONS.

WHILST these particulars may serve to convince us of the identity of John the Baptist with the messenger of the Lord foretold by the ancient prophets, they may also enable us to form a just estimate of his character, and withal of the testimony which he bore to Jesus Christ.

¹ Matt. iii. 2, 8. Mark i. 15.

Let us inquire then, is he in general intitled to the character of a man of integrity and veracity? And we may safely answer from the previous observations, that he well deserves the reputation of a great and good man. We see in him austerity of life, abstinence from selfish gratifications, contempt of the pleasure and vanities of the world, an active yet discreet zeal, a courage and constancy arising from true piety, and sincere modesty and humility. We see him exhorting all men to righteousness, and living in a manner suitable to his own exhortations. He was appointed by God to admonish and reprove with all authority; and he fulfilled his office sincerely, uprightly, and fearlessly. The Pharisees and Sadducees, the great men of his nation, who came to his baptism, he flattered not: he told them they were sinners in need of repentance, and he bade them repent of their sins. To Herod himself he addressed the like authoritative language of reproof and condemnation; though he could not have been ignorant of the danger to which he exposed himself by telling disagreeable truths to an unprincipled and powerful prince. By his blameless and upright behaviour he gained the respect and esteem of the Jews: and after his death their historian Josephus, who seems to have had no temptation to be partial to his memory, did justice to his cha-

racter, and recorded his virtues, and bore testimony to the impression which they made on the minds of the people^k.

But was he interested, let us inquire, in bearing testimony in behalf of Jesus, so that a regard to his own honour or advantage might have tempted him to depart from his usual regard to truth and virtue? Views of personal interest, we have already seen, had no effect in deterring him from reproving the malignity of the Pharisees and Sadducees, or the licentiousness of Herod; nor, we may therefore presume, would such views have had any effect towards inducing him to praise and exalt any one who did not deserve it. So far however was the exaltation of Jesus from contributing to John's worldly honour or advantage, that it was the very cause, which led, as he knew and declared that it would lead, to his own depression.

In truth had he been influenced by views of interest, ambition, vanity, popularity, his testimony to the character of Jesus must have completely counteracted and defeated every project of such a nature. Every thing that he said of Jesus, instead of aggrandizing and exalting, tended to lower and to debase, himself in the

^k Dr. Jortin.

comparison. To the question of the Pharisees concerning himself he answered, "I am not the Christ: I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias." Thus he disclaimed all pretensions on his own part to a rivalry with Jesus, and represented himself as no more than "a voice," a sound, whose office it was to give notice of his coming, and then to sink into silence¹.

At the same time he added, in explanation of the infinite distance between them, "I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you whom ye know not: he it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose:" thus indicating by an allusion to customs, which prevailed in the eastern countries, that Jesus was as much superior to himself as the greatest master to the meanest servant, and that he was not worthy to perform towards his Lord the most abject menial offices.

To these words he added others, equally indicative of the superior character of the coming Messiah, as illustrated by the superior acts which he should perform: "I indeed baptize with water: but he shall baptize with the

¹Bishop Horne.

Holy Ghost and with fire: whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire:" thus announcing the divine power, with which Jesus should enforce his ministry, and the judicial authority with which he should discriminate between the good and the wicked.

By these and similar testimonies, did the Baptist exalt the character of Jesus to the diminution of his own, before Jesus entered upon his ministry. When his ministry had commenced, and was in its progress attended by the increase of Jesus, and the consequent abatement of John's influence, reputation, and authority, the testimony of the Baptist still continued to be of the same nature. His disciples were jealous of the change, and complained to him of Jesus. But he repressed their jealousy: he appealed to his former declarations of his own inferiority, and of the excellence and pre-eminence of Jesus: and he repeated and re-asserted the same contrast between them to his own prejudice in the strongest terms. Of their different conditions, he spake as the result of the divine will and commission. He described himself as only "the forerunner of the Christ:" Jesus, as "the Christ." He described himself as only "the bridegroom's friend," exulting in the bride-

groom's prosperity; Jesus, as "the bridegroom." He described his own "decrease" and the "increase" of Jesus, as alike certain and necessary. He described himself, as being "of the earth, as earthly, and speaking of the earth;" Jesus he described, as "coming from above," as "coming from heaven," as "being above all." Such particulars in the testimony of John shew the absurdity of supposing, that he could have been influenced in the bearing of his testimony by any regard to his own honour or advantage, at variance with his usual character for integrity and truth.

Once more, let us inquire, whether any instance can be adduced from his history, which may serve to impeach his veracity? Far from it: but several instances may be adduced, and those of a very remarkable kind and of no slight importance, to support and establish it. He called Jesus "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world:" by which words he gave it to be understood, that Jesus would not die a natural death, but would be sacrificed for the sins of men: and Jesus accordingly, we well know, was so sacrificed: "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter." He said that "he must decrease, and that Jesus must increase:" and accordingly we well know, that the authority of John gradually abated, and in

a short time expired with himself, whereas the Gospel of Jesus went on with fresh accessions of strength and glory, till it was established far and wide, and for ever. He said, that Jesus would baptize with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: and accordingly we well know, that Jesus did send the Holy Ghost upon his Apostles, and "there appeared cloven tongues, like as of fire, which sat upon each of them." He said, that "the fan of Jesus was in his hand, and he would thoroughly purge his floor, and gather the wheat into his garner, but burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire:" and accordingly we know, that Jesus did pour forth destruction upon the Jews attended with special manifestations of favour to his faithful followers, for whom he appears to have provided a place of refuge in a neighbouring town, at that tremendous desolation of Jerusalem, which stands upon record an indelible emblem of the universal judgment, which in further pursuance of the Baptist's words he will execute hereafter.

Here then are several remarkable cases, whereby the character of John the Baptist is established, not merely as a man of veracity, but at the same time as an inspired prophet. The fulfilment of these prophecies did not depend upon him; or upon Jesus, humanly speaking; or upon any united efforts of them both, for

bringing them to pass. Nor were they such cases, as that any man could have hazarded a conjecture upon them as probable events in the common course of nature. If then in such cases as these John proved himself to be, not only a man of veracity, but a prophet; and these cases, let it be observed at the same time, preclude every suspicion that he was an enthusiast, for it is not the property of enthusiasm to foretel future events; then does it follow, that the rest of his testimony to the person and character of Christ demands our credit, not merely upon the ground of his being a man of honesty and integrity, but upon that of his being a divinely inspired messenger, and speaking by divine inspiration, as "a man sent from God."

In short, every circumstance, which we know of the life and actions of John the Baptist, tends to the establishment of his character beyond all reasonable dispute. And if his character be such, as we have supposed it to be, then is his testimony to Jesus deserving of our implicit confidence; and it is, as in manner most clear, so in matter most important. By that testimony we are assured, that Jesus is "the Son of God," "the only-begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father;" that he "cometh from above, he cometh from heaven, and is above all;" that he is "the Lamb of God, which taketh

away the sins of the world ;" that it is he "whom God sent," and that he "speaketh the words of God ;" that "what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth," and that he "hath declared" the invisible God, whom "no man hath seen at any time ;" that God gave not to him "the Spirit by measure ;" that "of his fulness have all we received ;" that "the Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hands ;" that "his fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather the wheat into his garner, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire ;" finally, that "he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life ; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life ; but the wrath of God abideth on him." "This is the record of John : " and it comprises, as we see, together with a clear and positive testimony to the truth and divine origin of our holy religion, express declarations concerning some of its most important doctrines ; such as the divinity of our Saviour, his pre-existence in heaven, his pre-eminence and other perfections, his atonement for the sins of men, his return hereafter to judgment.

Let us willingly receive this testimony of the Baptist. Let us at the same time admire and imitate the holiness of life, by which he gave credit to his testimony. Let us listen likewise

to his admonition, and "repent, and bring forth fruits meet for repentance." And let us, after his example, "constantly speak the truth, boldly rebuke sin, and patiently suffer for the truth's sake." To these lessons of religious improvement the Church directs us in the Collect for the day. Thus shall we keep the festival most effectually to the honour of "Almighty God, by whose providence his servant John Baptist was wonderfully born, and sent to prepare the way of his Son our Saviour by the preaching of repentance." Thus under his blessing shall we take the most effectual means for removing every obstacle, that may impede our reception of him at his second coming: so that "every valley may be exalted, and every mountain and hill may be made low;" and we may see with grateful adoration, and seeing may partake of, "the salvation of God."

Collects.

"ALMIGHTY God, by whose providence thy servant John Baptist was wonderfully born, and sent to prepare the way of thy Son our Saviour by (the) preaching of repentance; Make us so to follow his doctrine and holy life, that we may truly repent according to his preaching; and after his example constantly speak

the truth, boldly rebuke vice, and patiently suffer for the truth's sake ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen^m.*"

"ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who hatest nothing that thou hast made, and dost forgive the sins of all them that are penitent ; Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we worthily lamenting our sins, and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of thee, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amenⁿ.*"

"O LORD Jesus Christ, who at thy first coming didst send thy messenger to prepare thy way before thee ; Grant that the ministers and stewards of thy mysteries may likewise so prepare and make ready thy way, by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just ; that at thy second coming to judge the world we may be found an acceptable people in thy sight, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Spirit, ever one God, world without end. *Amen^o.*"

^m Collect for the Day. ⁿ Collect for Ash-Wednesday.
^o Collect for the third Sunday in Advent.

HARK through the lonely waste
By foot of man unpaced,
"Prepare the way," a warning voice resounds !
"Level the opposing hill,
The hollow valley fill,
Make straight the crooked, smooth the rugged grounds ;
Prepare a passage, form it plain and broad,
And through the desert make a highway for our God !"

Thine, BAPTIST, was the cry,
In ages long gone by
Heard in clear accents by the prophet's ear :
As if 'twere thine to wait,
And with imperial state
Herald some eastern monarch's proud career :
Who thus might march his host in full array,
And speed through trackless wilds his unresisted way.

But other task hadst thou
Than lofty hills to bow,
Make straight the crooked, the rough places plain.
Thine was the harder part
To smooth the human heart,
The wilderness where sin had fix'd his reign ;
To make deceit his mazy wiles forego,
Bring down high-vaulting pride, and lay ambition low.

344 *There was a man sent from God, &c.*

Such, BAPTIST, was thy care,
That no obstruction there
Might check the progress of the King of Kings ;
But that a clear high way
Might welcome the array
Of heavenly graces which his presence brings ;
And where Repentance had prepar'd the road,
There Faith might enter in, and Love to man and God.

ST. PETER.

The first, Simon who is called Peter. MATT. x. 2.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE OF ST. PETER.

THE birth-place and parentage of Peter, the Saint commemorated by the Church this day ; his occupation and way of life ; his first introduction to our Lord ; his intermediate mode of living, and opportunities of learning our Lord's character ; his subsequent call to be, first a disciple, and then an apostle, of Christ ; have been mentioned on a former occasion, in our biographical notice of "Andrew, Simon Peter's brother." On that occasion also allusion was made to the name of Cephas, which was bestowed upon him : a name, signifying in its Hebrew or Syro-Chaldaick form a rock or stone ; and thence translated into the Greek form of Petros, rendered familiar to us by its vernacular form of Peter, and indicating that he, to whom it was given, should be a chief and

powerful instrument in establishing the Gospel of Christ.

Peter was married when called by our Lord to be a disciple, and appears to have been settled at Capernaum. Thither at least our Lord retired after the call; and there he entered into Peter's house, and graciously exercised his miraculous power by healing Peter's wife's mother of a fever^a. And he appears to have made the same house his usual residence, whenever he took up his abode in that city; being probably well pleased with the disposition and manners of all the members of the family, as well as of the two brethren, Peter and Andrew, who are mentioned as living there together^b.

In the narratives of the gospel history St. Peter is a prominent character. He received from our Lord several marks of distinction. And he further rendered himself conspicuous, sometimes by the energy of his disposition, and his natural warmth and sincerity of heart, and sometimes by a timidity and want of constancy of mind, to which he appears to have been constitutionally subject, until strengthened by the divine grace.

By our Lord he was admitted to several marks of distinguished favour. He was one of

^a Mark i. 30. ^b Mark i. 29. Dr. Lardner.

the three Apostles, to whom our Lord gave an appropriate and significant appellation^c; and he was one of the same three, whom our Lord took with him to witness the raising of Jairus's daughter^d; in whose presence he was transfigured on mount Tabor^e; and with whom he retired to pray in the garden of Gethsemane the night before he suffered^f. This has been already mentioned more fully in our notice of St. John, who and his brother James were the other two. He was one of the four, St. Andrew and the last named were the others, to whom our Lord delivered his prophecy concerning the destruction of Jerusalem^g; and he was one of the two, whom our Lord sent before him to prepare his last passover^h. As was observed concerning St. John, his companion on this occasion, so also concerning this Apostle it may be observed, that in some cases he was distinguished by a token of singular honour. In the catalogues of the Apostles he is placed first, being evidently the order determined by our Lord himself; an order however, as will hereafter be noticed, not of supremacy, but of

^c John i. 42. ^d Matt. xix. 26. ^e Matt. xvii. 1. ^f Matt. xxvi. 37. ^g Mark xiv. 33. ^h Luke xxii. 8.

precedence^l. To him our Lord made that celebrated declaration, with reference to the name which he had given him, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church: and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven^k." And to him individually he gave at one time the promise, which at another he addressed to all the Apostles, "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven." For Peter our Lord wrought a miracle, to enable him to pay the tribute money^l: and for Peter our Lord prayed, that in the hour of danger his faith might fail not^m.

Meanwhile St. Peter was frequently rendered conspicuous by his own warmth of temperament, and earnestness and sincerity of disposition. This manifested itself on occasion of the miracle which preceded his call to the discipleship, when "he was astonished and all that were with him at the draught of the fishes which they had taken," but he alone "fell down at Jesus"

^l Matt. x. 1. Mark iii. 16. Luke vi. 14.

xvi. 17—19.

^k Matt. xvii. 24—27.

^m Luke xxii. 31, 32.

^k Matt.

^m Luke

knees, saying, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord^a.” It was the same zeal and energy of mind, which prompted him, when the disciples, the night after the miracle of the loaves, saw Jesus walking on the sea, to express his desire, “Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water,” and, in obedience to his bidding, to “come down out of the ship, and walk on the water to go to Jesus^b,” which dictated first his unwillingness and refusal to suffer Jesus to wash his feet, and then his intreaty to him to wash not his feet only, but also his hands and his head^c: which stimulated him to anticipate his brethren in reply to the question of Jesus to the twelve, “Will ye also go away?” by answering forthwith, “Lord, to whom should we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life^d,” and again, in reply to another question from our Lord to the twelve, “Whom say ye that I am?” by answering with the like expedition, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God^e,” which animated him to meet the gracious caution of our Lord to his Apostles, “All ye shall be offended because of me this night,” by an immediate avowal of his own individual and unconquerable fidelity, “Though all men shall be

^a Luke v. 8. ^b Matt. xiv. 28—31. ^c John xiii. 6—10.

^d John vi. 68. ^e Matt. xvi. 13.

offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended :” “ Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee :” and which gave a temporary vigour to his actions as well as to his words, and inspirited him to “ draw his sword” in the midst of the band of soldiers and officers, and “ strike a servant of the high priest, and smite off his ear.”

But this forwardness of the Apostle was accompanied with a want of steadiness and firmness of conduct, the result, as it should seem, of a natural timidity, which required to be corrected and strengthened by the divine grace. Although he was eager to go down out of the ship, and to walk on the water to go to Jesus, yet “ when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid ; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.” Although he was prompt in making confession of his faith in his Lord, and, when warned of his impending danger, confidently made answer, that whatever might be the weakness of all others, and by whatever perils he might be menaced, yet would he never be offended nor deny him ; he nevertheless, when put to the test, denied, and twice repeated his denial^a. Although he precipitately drew

^a Matt. xxvi. 33, 35. ^b John xviii. 10. ^c Matt. xxvi. 57—71.

his sword in the garden, and used it in defence of his Master, and assaulted and wounded the high priest's servant; his resolution failed in the hall of the high priest's palace, he could not endure the interrogatories of the damsels, he "denied" and "denied with an oath" that he was with Jesus of Nazareth, and protested "with cursing and swearing" that he "knew not the man."

It is in full accordance with the character of Peter, as already noticed, that when, upon this evidence of his weakness and inconstancy, "the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter, Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out and wept bitterly^x." It does not appear that he returned into the high priest's house; or that he followed our Lord in the succeeding stages of his suffering; or that he was present at the crucifixion. "It is likely," as hath been beautifully observed, "that he was under too much concern of mind to appear in publick, and that he chose retirement as most suitable to his present temper and circumstances^y."

On the morning of the Resurrection, it pleased the goodness of God to comfort Peter in his af-

^x Luke xxii. 61, 62. ^y Dr. Lardner.

fiction, by intelligence addressed through Mary Magdalene to the disciples, and especially to Peter by name, that "Jesus was risen from the dead^z." Peter and John instantly hastened towards the sepulchre; when John, being the younger, "outran Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying: yet went he not in^a." Peter followed: and it is to him an honourable circumstance^b, which is recorded by John himself, whose affection for his Master no one will dispute, that Peter went into the sepulchre, and examined the condition of the graveclothes, and ascertained by ocular testimony, to his own and his companion's satisfaction, the fact of their Lord's resurrection.

On the same day the Lord shewed himself to Peter: an event, which is related by St. Luke and St. Paul^c, though no circumstances of it are recorded. He had previously shewn himself to Mary Magdalene and the women. But, as Chrysostom observes, this was the first appearance of those which were made to men: He was first seen by him who was most desirous of seeing him. Peter, says the same writer, was the first that had made a signal confession of

^z Matt. xxviii.

^a John xx. 4—8.

^b Dr. Lardner.

^c Luke xxiv. 33, 34. 1 Cor. xv. 5.

his Master; and therefore it was fit and reasonable, that he should first see him alive after his resurrection. Chrysostom further remarks, that Peter had lately denied his Lord, the grief whereof lay hard upon him; and that our Saviour was therefore willing to administer some consolation to him, and, as soon as might be, to let him see that he had not cast him off: like the kind Samaritan he made haste to help him, and to pour oil into his wounded conscience^d.

In the twenty-first chapter of St. John's Gospel is the narrative of a remarkable appearance of our Lord, in which St. Peter bore a conspicuous part and had a particular interest. When our Lord had shewn himself, probably in some unusual habit, to Peter and John and several others of his disciples; and John, having discovered him by his causing a miraculous draught of fishes, had declared to Peter that it was the Lord; the latter immediately with affectionate and ready zeal "girt his fisher's coat about him, and cast himself into the sea" impatient to welcome his divine Master. To the question afterwards put to him by the Lord, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?" possibly in allusion to that superior degree of at-

^d Dr. Cave.

tachment which he had rashly boasted before his fall, "Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended," he now answered with an humility and moderation, which that fall appears to have taught him, "Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." The question was put three several times to Peter, and each time received the like answer, and was each time followed by the like injunction, "Feed my sheep." Thus did the Lord judge fit, that he, who by a threefold denial had renounced his allegiance, should by a threefold confession re-assert and confirm it: and thus did he shew that he accepted his profession of love, and renewed to him his apostolical commission^c. His charge was succeeded by a prophetic warning of the manner, in which the Apostle should glorify God by his death; and by an encouragement to follow his Lord in bearing undeviating testimony to the truth in the service to which he was appointed.

Soon after our Lord's ascension, Peter proposed to the disciples that another Apostle should be chosen in the room of Judas Iscariot^d. On the day of Pentecost next ensuing, when the promised gift of the Holy Ghost had been shed forth, Peter standing up with the

^c Dr. Lardner. ^d Acts i. 15—26.

eleven preached to the assembled multitude, and produced a conversion of about three thousand souls^g. Soon afterwards he together with John healed at the beautiful gate of the temple a man who had been lame from his birth, and thereupon addressed the people with efficacy and success: and being brought before the council, and imprisoned, and threatened with further punishment, pleaded boldly and resolutely in the name of Jesus^h. When Ananias and Sapphira kept back part of the price of their land, with a false assertion that they had given the whole, Peter charged them with "lying to the Holy Ghost," that is "to God," whereupon they were smitten by the hand of God with immediate deathⁱ. Amongst "the signs and wonders, which were wrought in the midst of the people by the hands of the Apostles," those of Peter bore a distinguished place, "insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them^k." And when the Apostles were apprehended, and brought before the council, and again commanded "not to teach in the name of Jesus," Peter and the other Apo-

^g Acts ii. 14—47.^h Acts iii. iv.ⁱ Acts v. 1—11.^k Acts v. 12—16.

stles maintained the necessity of their bearing witness to that name, asserting that they ought to "obey God rather than man¹."

Thus far St. Peter was residing in Jerusalem. Soon after we find him deputed by the Apostles with St. John to visit the Church recently planted in Samaria by Philip the deacon, "laying their hands upon" the newly-baptized converts; thus confirming them by that rite, which has since been maintained in the Christian Church; and conveying to them "the gift of the Holy Ghost:" severely rebuking Simon Magus for supposing that "the gift of God might be purchased with money:" and thence "returning to Jerusalem, and preaching the Gospel in many villages of the Samaritans" on the way^m.

Again we find him, availing himself probably of the rest which the Churches enjoyed "throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria," passing through all parts of the country, and leaving where he went some signal proof of the supernatural power, with which he was endowed. At Lydda, Æneas, a paralytick, "who had kept his bed eight years," was in the name of Jesus made immediately whole. And at Joppa, Tabitha was restored to life and health,

¹ Acts v. 29.

^m Acts viii. 14—25.

after she had died and was laid out for her burial".

From Joppa, in compliance with a request from Cornelius, a Gentile and "a centurion of the Italian band," and in obedience to a special revelation from heaven, St. Peter went to Cæsarea by the sea-side, the city where the Roman governor had his residence. There he preached to Cornelius, and his kinsmen and near friends, so that "the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the word." The Apostle hereupon caused them to be "baptized in the name of the Lord^o:" and, on his return to Jerusalem, his account of the supernatural circumstances attending that important event convinced the Apostles and other disciples, who were offended at his conduct in holding communion with men uncircumcised, that he had acted in conformity with the will of God, so that "they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life^p." Thus the door of faith was opened by Peter to the Gentile world; and thenceforth the Gospel was freely and successfully preached to them as well as to the Jews.

Peter probably now continued at Jerusalem, till his imprisonment by Herod Agrippa, who

^o Acts ix. 32—42. ^o Acts x. ^p Acts xi. 18.

towards the end of his reign had become an open persecutor of believers. "He killed James the brother of John with the sword:" and Peter was destined to a similar fate, from which however, the night before his intended execution, he was miraculously delivered. "Prayer was made for him without ceasing of the Church unto God:" and God sent his angel to deliver him, whilst he with a mind composed and undisturbed, notwithstanding his great extremity, and under the apprehension of impending death, "was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains¹."

Whither he now retired, is matter of conjecture only: nor are any particulars in his history ascertained during the interval which preceded the council of Jerusalem concerning the obligation of the Gentile converts to observe the Jewish law. Here St. Peter delivered his opinion in the negative, illustrating and confirming it by a statement of what God had done by his ministration for the Gentiles of Cæsarea; whence it was manifest, that they might be saved by faith in Jesus Christ without the ritual observances of the law. And the Council determined, conformably to this opinion, and in pursuance of the sentence of

¹ Acts xii.

James, the son of Alphæus, who, as Bishop of Jerusalem, presided at the Council¹.

It was upon this occasion that "James and Peter and John gave to Paul and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship," that the two latter should continue to preach the Gospel to the heathens, and the former and the other Apostles to the Jews². Peter had previously had personal intercourse with Paul, when Paul, three years after his conversion, had come up to Jerusalem, and had been "brought by Barnabas to the Apostles," and "saw Peter and abode with him fifteen days³." And afterwards he had intercourse with him again, when Peter having gone to Antioch, and having at first conversed freely with the Gentile converts, from whom he subsequently withdrew and separated himself, fearing to displease some converts from the Jews, Paul "withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed:" so severely reproving his dissimulation and his deviation from the truth of the Gospel, and so forcibly urging the doctrine of "justification by the faith of Jesus Christ, and not by the works of the law," that Peter appears to have acquiesced in the reproof and in the argument⁴;

¹ Acts xv.

² Gal. ii. 6—10.

³ Acts ix. 27.

Gal. i. 18.

⁴ Gal. ii. 11—14.

and it is reasonable to suppose that he never more betrayed the like unsteadiness, but remained ever afterwards firm to the true principles of the Gospel by holding indiscriminate communion with the Gentile as well as with the Jewish converts to the Church*.

This concludes the scriptural account of St. Peter. The books of the New Testament afford no light for determining where he was for several years afterwards: nor do any other books give a very distinct account of his travels. On quitting Antioch, or after some time spent partly in Judea and partly at Antioch, he probably went into other parts of the continent, particularly the parts which are expressly mentioned at the beginning of his first Epistle. Origen, as quoted by Eusebius, says, "he is supposed to have preached to the Jews of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Bithynia, Cappadocia, and Asia." And it is likely that he resided a considerable time in those parts, and was well acquainted with the Christians there, to whom he afterwards addressed two Epistles†.

On leaving these countries, it may be supposed that he went to Rome, but probably not till after St. Paul's first imprisonment there.

* Dr. Lardner.

† Ibid.

Several of St. Paul's Epistles supply a powerful argument for St. Peter's absence from Rome for a considerable space of time. In his Epistle to the Romans, where he salutes many brethren by name, he makes no mention of Peter. In his several Epistles written from Rome, he makes no mention of Peter. Nor is there the slightest intimation in any of these Epistles, that at the time of their being written Peter had ever been in that city. It is most probable therefore that he did not visit Rome before the year 63 or 64; which was not long before his death^a.

His death is related to have taken place by order of Nero, at the same time with that of St. Paul, in a general persecution of the Christians, mentioned already in our biographical notice of the latter Apostle. The instrument of his martyrdom was the cross: a manner of death which our Lord had foretold to St. Peter, who in his second Epistle alludes to the prediction^a. He is generally supposed to have been crucified with his head downwards; "having himself desired that it might be in that manner," as Origen relates; and saying, as related by Jerome, "that he was unworthy

^a Dr. Cave, Dr. Lardner. ^a 2 Pet. i. 14.

to be crucified as his Master was." It is certain that among the Romans some persons were crucified in that manner, for the purpose of increasing their pain and ignominy. Nevertheless some ancient writers, who speak of St. Peter's martyrdom by crucifixion, do not take notice of that circumstance. The truth therefore of the circumstance has been doubted. Allowing the truth of it however, it has been also supposed to have originated, rather in the malice of his persecutors, than in the modesty of the Apostle himself: a modesty, vain and preposterous; not agreeable to the practice of any other of the martyrs, who were put to death upon the cross; nor suitable to the true spirit of a martyr, to whom it rather belongs to bear with fortitude the punishment inflicted on him, than to seek an aggravation of torments from his executioners^b.

Jerome states that he was buried at Rome in the Vatican, near the triumphal way; adding that he was in veneration, as well he might be, all over the world. Caius, a writer of about the year 212, speaks of the tombs of the two Apostles, Peter and Paul, at Rome: and Chrysostom supposes Peter to have been buried in

^b See Dr. Lardner.

that city^c. Their monuments were to be seen in Eusebius's time, with their names inscribed upon them, in the cemeteries of that city^d.

St. Peter has been already spoken of, as a married man, his wife's mother having been the subject of one of our Lord's publick miracles. That he was attended by his wife on his travels, appears probable from a passage in St. Paul^e; and it is related by Clement of Alexandria, that she suffered martyrdom before him; "when St. Peter, seeing her led forth to death, rejoiced for the grace of God vouchsafed to him; and calling to her by name, exhorted and comforted her, saying, Remember the Lord^f." The time and place of her martyrdom are not specified. Being a companion of her husband on his travels, she may have attended him to Rome, and suffered about the same time with him in Nero's persecution, which, as we know from Tacitus's account, comprehended persons of both sexes and of all conditions.

St. Peter has left behind him two Epistles, written probably in the year 63 or 64, or at the latest 65, not long before the Apostle's death; that he was old and near his end, when he wrote the latter Epistle, is evident from his

^c Dr. Lardner.

^d Dr. Cave.

^e 1 Cor. ix. 5.

^f Cited by Dr. Lardner.

own language, where he speaks of himself as “knowing, that shortly he must put off this tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ had shewed him.”

The place of writing was probably Rome, signified figuratively by the name of Babylon, as St. John likewise uses the name in the Revelation^c. Some commentators have thought that Babylon in Assyria, and others that Babylon in Egypt, was intended: but although during the long interval, in which we have no account of Peter, it is very possible that he may have travelled in Assyria or Egypt, there is no ancient testimony whatever of his having done so. A third Babylon, namely in Seleucia, has been also mentioned as the place intended; but with little probability^b. On the whole the more general opinion concurs with the judgment held in the time of Eusebius, the oldest author extant who mentions the subject, and with the testimony apparently cited by him from earlier authors, that Rome is figuratively intended by Babylon^d: a name, commonly given at that time by his countrymen the Jews to Rome, and alleged to be so given by them even to the present time, because, as they had formerly been reduced to subjection by the

^c Bp. Tomline.

^b Dr. Lardner.

^d Dr. Macknight.

Babylonians, so had they latterly incurred the like fate from the Romans^k: or probably intended to signify, that Rome would resemble Babylon in its idolatry, and in its hostility and persecution towards the Church of God, and that it would eventually resemble Babylon in its utter destruction and desolation^l.

The first Epistle is expressly addressed, and the latter is understood to have been written, "to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia:" certainly to the Christians of those countries; whether to converts from Judaism or heathenism is disputed; most probably to the whole body of Christians who resided in those regions of Asia Minor, whether of Jewish or Gentile extraction.

The general design of these Epistles is to inculcate upon all those, who are chosen to a profession of the faith of the Gospel, a stedfast adherence to that faith; and withal to practical virtue, to a quiet and blameless life, and to patience and fortitude under distresses and persecutions. Compared with the Epistles of the other Apostles, they give evident proofs of having proceeded from one and the same Spirit. Considered with a view to their own peculiar merits, they have been commended by different

^k Dr. Mill.

^l Dr. Macknight.

critics, as "some of the finest and most excellent books of the New Testament:" as "sparing in words, but abounding in sense:" as "distinguished by the weightiness of their instructions, and by their great strength and majesty of manner:" as "perpetual monuments of a divine inspiration, and of the fulfilment of the promise made by Christ to Peter and his brother Andrew, that, on their following him, he would 'make them fishers of men'^m." The Church in her Collect for the day commemorates our Apostle, as having received from Christ "many excellent gifts," and as having been "earnestly commanded by him to feed the flock" of God. Of the excellence of his gifts, and of the fidelity with which he led the sheep of Christ to pasture, we have a never-failing proof in these Epistles, which must cause him to be for ever remembered with gratitude in the Church of Christ. The obligation, which the Church moreover owes to him on account of the Gospel of St. Mark, containing, as it does, the substance of St. Peter's historical discourses, and written probably under the dictation, at least with the approbation, of the Apostle, has been already mentioned in our notice of that Evangelist.

^m See Bp. Tomline, Dr. Lardner, and Dr. Macknight.

REFLEXIONS.

THE character and conduct of St. Peter, as exemplified in his life, set before us patterns of excellencies and defects, which are related with much simplicity and honesty by the inspired historians. They neither conceal the latter, out of any partial fondness for the Apostle, or any uncandid desire to do honour to their religion; nor do they keep back the former, as if they were fearful of obscuring their own characters by the brightness of his. It has been observed, that St. Matthew and St. John, the two Apostles who have recorded the life and ministry of our Saviour, have recounted more occurrences honourable to St. Peter, than the other two Evangelistsⁿ: the fact proves them to have been free from envy and ill-will towards him; as the fact both of these and of the other Evangelists having recorded his fault of denying our Lord proves them all to have been free from irrational prepossessions; from a blind partiality towards the Apostle, as well as from a disingenuous wish to recommend their religion unduly, by withholding the defects, and thus magnifying the character, of one of its most conspicuous professors and ministers.

ⁿ Dr. Lardner.

The virtues of St. Peter deserve our admiration and imitation. Among these may be enumerated his lively sense of his own unworthiness testified by his exclamation on the miraculous draught of fishes, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord:" his ready obedience in following the call of Christ: his faith and zeal in desiring to go to Jesus, and casting himself into the sea for that purpose: his modesty and humility, expressed in his refusal to permit his Lord to wash his feet, and his earnest desire to partake in his Lord's favour, as expressed in his subsequent exclamation, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head:" his attachment to his Lord, at the time when "many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him," and when in reply to Christ's question to the twelve, "Will ye also go away? Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life:" his noble faith in the divinity of our Lord, expressed both upon that and upon another occasion, and received by our Lord with a blessing, signifying the heavenly origin of the confession, and his own sense of its value: add to these his bitter repentance for the offence he had committed in denying his Lord; his subsequent submissiveness and modesty under the reproof, with which his Lord received him;

and his earnestness, fortitude, and constancy in preaching the Gospel of his crucified and risen Master, undaunted by labours, stripes, and bonds, and imprisonment, until "he glorified God," by the same sort of death, by which his Lord had formerly expired.

The defects of St. Peter are not numerous : and they seem to have arisen chiefly from a natural warmth of temper, which caused him not to weigh well the dangers and difficulties of an enterprise against his ability to execute it, accompanied by a constitutional timidity and weakness, which caused him, though well-intentioned, to give way before sudden or strong temptation. He had the faith to walk upon the waves to his divine Master ; but, when he saw the sea boisterous, his faith deserted him, and he became afraid. He was forward to acknowledge Jesus to be the Messiah, and declared himself ready to die in that profession ; a declaration made certainly with unbecoming confidence and presumption, as well as in ignorance of his own infirmity ; and yet soon after he thrice denied, and ratified with oaths and curses his denial, that he knew any thing of Jesus.

His failings as well as his virtues are recorded doubtless for our admonition. Whilst his virtues may prompt us to emulation, his failings may warn us, " when we think we are standing,

to take heed lest we fall;" to be diffident especially of our own strength in the hour of trial, and to have recourse to that divine aid, without which our own strength will ever be ineffectual, by prayer "that our faith fail not;" and, if we are so unhappy as to fall, still by the power of divine grace to endeavour to rise again, and, when we are converted and brought again into the right way, to "strengthen our brethren," by the soundness of our principles, and the consistency of our conduct. Here the subsequent life and exertions of St. Peter may serve for our example. But here also we may derive from his behaviour a lesson of watchfulness and caution even in our best condition, suggested by that timidity with respect to the Jewish and Gentile converts, and that inconstancy of behaviour and practical deflexion from his own principles, which drew upon him the publick opposition, and the unanswerable reproof of St. Paul.

As practical reflexions upon the actions and character of St. Peter the foregoing may suffice. The following are added with reference to his connexion with the other Apostles: amongst whom though it must have appeared from our notice of his life that he acted a prominent and a conspicuous part, yet it does not appear that he possessed any power or authority over them:

it does not appear, either that any such privilege was conferred upon him by our Lord, or that it was at any time exercised or assumed by himself, or admitted by the other Apostles.

The Church of Rome indeed asserts, that an unlimited supremacy was conferred by our Lord upon St. Peter; as the ground upon which she asserts the supremacy of her own Bishop, the supposed successor of St. Peter in the Romish see. And she refers for the reason of her assertion to our Lord's declaration to Peter, when, having demanded of his Apostles in general "Whom say ye that I am," and having received from Peter in particular the answer, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God;" he replied, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven."

If in this promise of our Lord there was any privilege personal and peculiar to Peter alone,

the promise was fulfilled once for all in the person of Peter; who was the first Apostle that preached to the Jews immediately after the descent of the Holy Ghost; and who was, about eight years after, the first Apostle that preached to the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius at Cæsarea. By these means the foundation of the universal Church of Christ, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail, may be said to have been laid in Peter: and to Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven may be said to have been given; for by being the first person who proclaimed the Gospel both to Jews and Gentiles, after the ascension of our Lord, he, as it were, was the door-keeper, who opened the doors of heaven to all mankind; retaining them in their spiritual bondage, till he preached to them repentance and baptism in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and loosing from their bondage those who were induced by his preaching to accept the proffered terms of salvation.

Thus the promise of our Lord may have been peculiar and personal to St. Peter. But if it be understood as denoting him to be the future support, and governor, and dispenser of the blessings, of the Church, it then confers a privilege, not peculiar to Peter, but communicated to the

other Apostles also. If Peter be the rock, on which the Church is built, so that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it; it is elsewhere said to be "built upon the foundation of the Apostles" generally. If the giving to Peter of the keys of the kingdom of heaven be supposed to confer upon him the power of governing the Church; to the Apostles in general our Lord declared, "I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me: that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." If the investment of Peter with authority to bind and to loose be supposed to convey to him any power of punishing or absolving sinners; our blessed Lord employed the same form of words in an address to the Apostles in general, "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven." And again, when ready to leave the world, he tells them in less figurative terms, "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose soever sins ye remit, they

* Eph. ii. 20. * Luke xxii. 29, 30. * Matt. xviii. 18.

are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain they are retained¹.”

From these privileges and powers bestowed upon all the apostolical body it is evident, that our Lord did not bestow upon Peter any personal prerogative, as supreme head and universal pastor of the Church; much less upon any others as his successors in the possession of such prerogative: even if he did bestow upon him personally the privilege of being the first preacher of the Gospel to mankind. But indeed the confession of Peter, to the Messiahship and divinity of his Lord, has been often regarded, and probably has been properly regarded, as the confession of the other Apostles likewise, of whom he, as Chrysostom says, “acted as the mouth²,” agreeably to that natural warmth of disposition, which usually prompted him to take a prominent part in their proceedings. Upon a former occasion, when, upon the desertion of him by some of his disciples, Jesus said unto the twelve, “Will ye also go away?” to the question, thus put to all the Apostles, Peter answered in the name of all, “Lord, to whom should we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and

¹ John xx. 21—23.

² Cited by Dr. Cave.

are sure, that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." Upon this occasion therefore, when Jesus asked his Apostles, "Whom say ye that I am?" and to the question, thus put to all, "Peter answered, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God;" it is but reasonable to suppose, that he spoke both the sentiments and in the name of all. Upon this view it is further no unreasonable supposition, that as Peter made his confession on behalf, not of himself only, but of the rest of the Apostles, so the promise, which was made in consequence, was intended, not for him only, but for all, though expressly addressed to him in particular as the spokesman and leader of the company.

But however this be, the words, if understood to be addressed personally to Peter, have appeared not to convey to him any power or authority over his brethren in the Apostolate: nor was such superiority at any time exercised or assumed by himself, or admitted by the other Apostles.

It is true that in the Acts of the Apostles he is represented as a leading person amongst his brethren, but not to a greater degree than may be justly attributed to superior age, to eminent talents and virtues, to an ardent temperament, still further animated perhaps by a sense of his Master's kindness, and by an earnest desire to

compensate for his former delinquency by more intense exertions in his service: and the personal esteem, naturally resulting from such considerations, would no doubt be heightened by the marks of favour which he had received from the Lord, especially by that precedence or primacy of order, which the Lord appears to have assigned him, as hath been inferred from the catalogues of the Apostles, and from other passages in which mention is made of him in connexion with some others of the body by the Evangelists. These reasons will amply account for Peter's being the first in proposing measures to the adoption of the other Apostles; for his taking a prominent part in their debates and proceedings; for his addressing the multitude, and answering their opponents, in their name; without our imagining that he regarded himself, or that they regarded him, as their master, possessing any jurisdiction over them; or as any more than one of their brethren, equal in office and authority to the rest.

Indeed the contrary appears from several occurrences, which are at variance with the notion of such superiority. "When the Apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John:" thus the Apostles in their collective capacity shewed themselves

superior to Peter, by sending him on this mission, and that too in conjunction with a colleague who appears to have been entrusted with the same powers as himself.

Again; when Peter, having admitted Cornelius and his company into the Church by baptism, was come up to Jerusalem, the Jewish converts "contended with him," and condemned him for holding communion with Gentiles; whilst he justified himself by "rehearsing the matter from the beginning, and expounding it by order unto them^u." But surely they would not have presumed to dispute with him, and pronounce a censure upon him, had he been acknowledged as the supreme head of the Church, and the infallible judge of controversies: nor would he have patiently pleaded his cause before them, had he claimed such a prerogative; nor have endeavoured to convince their understanding by his reasoning, instead of silencing their opposition by his authority.

Again; when a dissention arose at Antioch concerning the obligation of the Gentile converts to observe the Mosaick law, and an appeal was made on the subject to Jerusalem, and a council was held at Jerusalem for deciding it: Paul and Barnabas were sent for the

^r Acts viii. 14.

^u Acts xi. 2—4.

decision not to Peter in particular, but to the Apostles and Elders of the Church in general; and the decretory sentence was pronounced, not by Peter, though he as well as Paul and Barnabas spoke on the occasion, but by James the son of Alphæus, who, as Bishop of Jerusalem, presided at the meeting, even in the presence of Peter himself; and the letters written in consequence were addressed to the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia, in the names of "the Apostles, Elders, and brethren," of Jerusalem, without any mention of Peter, who, although the supposed judge of this and of all other controversies, and the supposed governor of these and of all other Churches, with intire satisfaction acquiesced in that which pleased the Apostles and Elders with the whole Church; and appears neither to have thought nor wished to set up his authority, as paramount to or independent of theirs*.

Again; St. Paul speaks of Peter in conjunction with two other Apostles, and recounts them as "James, Cephas, and John:" thus he places James first in order, probably because he then presided in the Church of Jerusalem, giving him thereby precedence over Peter; but

* Acts xv.

makes no difference among the three, whom he describes as "pillars" or chiefs of the Apostles⁷.

Again; St. Paul says that "the Gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto him, as the Gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter⁸:" thus claiming for himself an equality with Peter in the several departments of their ministry.

Once more; St. Paul, in the presence of St. Peter himself, accused him of dissimulation and of a practical departure from his own principles, on account of his conduct towards the Gentile converts, through fear of them which were of the circumcision. "When Peter was come to Antioch," saith he, "I withstood him to the face because he was to be blamed⁹." Peter acquiesced in the reproof. But neither would St. Paul have ventured on such an opposition, nor would St. Peter have submitted to it, had not the former possessed equal authority, or had the latter been invested with supreme jurisdiction over the other Apostles and the Church at large.

Upon the whole we perceive, that as the privilege of governing the Catholick or Univer-

⁷ Gal. ii. 9.

⁸ Gal. ii. 7.

⁹ Gal. ii. 11. See

Dr. Whitby upon this and the other passages, here referred to.

sal Church of Christ was not conferred by our Lord upon St. Peter; so also it was not at any time exercised or assumed by himself, or admitted by the other Apostles. The contrary appears from various particulars, as we have seen, both in their conduct and in his. If the Bishop of Rome would establish his claim to supremacy over the Church of Christ, he must seek the ground of it elsewhere than in the office and publick ministry of this great Apostle: at the same time we may observe that precedents and arguments must be sought elsewhere than in the domestick life of the same Apostle for the imposition of celibacy on the clergy of the Church of Rome.

Collects.

“O ALMIGHTY God, who by thy Son Jesus Christ didst give to thy Apostle Saint Peter many excellent gifts, and commandedst him earnestly to feed thy flock; Make, we beseech thee, all Bishops and Pastors diligently to preach thy holy word, and the people obediently to follow the same, that they may receive the crown of everlasting glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen*^b.”

“KEEP, we beseech thee, O Lord, thy

^b For the day.

Church with thy perpetual mercy. And because the frailty of man without thee cannot but fall, keep us ever by thy help from all things hurtful, and lead us to all things profitable to our salvation, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen*^c."

"O LORD, we beseech thee mercifully to hear our prayers, and spare all those who confess their sins unto thee; that they, whose consciences by sin are accused, by thy merciful pardon may be absolved, through Christ our Lord. *Amen*^d."

^c For the 15th Sunday after Trinity. ^d From the Communion.

LORD, when thy PETER, weak in faith,
By terror too severely tried,
Fail'd in thine hour of threaten'd death,
And thee forsook, and thee denied :

When thrice his ear the challenge heard,
And thrice his tongue renounced thy name,
And each sad time the recreant word
More loud and more impassion'd came :

One look from thee his fault reprov'd,
And made his slumbering conscience start;
One look from thee, so dearly lov'd,
Spoke daggers to his bleeding heart :

And sent him forth a prey to grief,
 Unheeded all his former fears,
 To seek in solitude relief
 From bitter and repentant tears.

Lord, when by human frailty led,
 We pass thy gracious warning by,
 Prone as we are awry to tread,
 And thee forsake, and thee deny :

(For well we know, to harden'd guilt
 Enslaved, thy name we boast in vain !
 Forego thy blood to save us spilt,
 Dispute thy sovereign right to reign :)

Grant us to feel, that still thine ear
 At distance hears each guilty speech ;
 Grant us to feel, that still from far
 Thine eye each guilty act can reach :

Grant us to feel the keen rebuke,
 By conscience, faithful guardian, sent,
 As if we saw thy pitying look,
 When on thy frail Apostle bent.

That pitying look ! O, may it melt
 Our hearts in penitential show'rs !
 May Peter's grief by us be felt,
 And, O ! be his forgiveness ours !

ST. JAMES.

James the son of Zebedee. MATT. iv. 21.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE OF ST. JAMES.

THE Saint of this day is frequently mentioned in the Gospels with reference to his parentage, as "James the son of Zebedee;" to distinguish him from the other Apostle, "James the son of Alphæus," whose life we have already considered. Partly for the like cause he is also called by ecclesiastical writers James the Great: a name of distinction however, which does not occur in the New Testament, although the epithet of "the Less" is upon one occasion applied by St. Mark to the son of Alphæus. The ground of this distinction is not agreed upon by ecclesiastical writers. Dr. Lightfoot says, that "James, or Jacob, is commonly called James the Great, in distinction from James the son of Alphæus, who is called

the Less, not for any dignity, or superiority of apostleship, that he had above the other; but either because this James was the elder, or because of the singular privacy, that Christ admitted him to with himself, as he also did Peter and John." That he was the elder of the two however is matter, of which there is no proof; if indeed there be any probability of it. But "it is manifest, that during the time of our Lord's abode on this earth, Peter, and James and John the two sons of Zebedee, were the most eminent and considerable of the disciples. They were the most favoured, and were admitted by our Lord to some special measure of confidence and freedom^a." Thus it appears by no means improbable, that James acquired this distinction of the Great, as being more eminent among the Apostles during the ministry of our Lord, than his namesake the son of Alphæus.

St. James was the elder brother of St. John, the Apostle and Evangelist. His parentage and early occupation, as likewise his call to the discipleship and apostleship, and the peculiar marks of attention and favour which he received from our Lord, have been mentioned in our notice of St. John. Allusion also was

^a Dr. Lardner.

there made to those transactions, in which our Apostle was particularly concerned : but to them more especial attention may be given on the present occasion.

Our Lord was on his way from Galilee to Jerusalem, for the purpose of attending one of the stated Jewish feasts ; namely, that of tabernacles, or of the dedication of the temple.

The land of Canaan or Palestine was in our Saviour's time divided into three principal provinces. On the north, and at the greatest distance from Jerusalem, was Galilee, inhabited formerly by the tribes of Zebulon and Naphthali, and containing the celebrated cities of Nazareth, Bethsaida, Cana, and Capernaum ; mount Tabor ; and the lake of Gennesareth or Tiberias, called also the sea of Galilee. This was the principal seat of our Lord's residence, and the chief scene of his miracles. The southern division was Judea, the inheritance of the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin : and containing within it Bethlehem, where our Lord was born, its metropolis Jerusalem, where he suffered, and Mount Olivet or the Mount of Olives hard by Jerusalem, whence he ascended into heaven. Hither he was accustomed to come upon occasion of the great feasts of the Jewish people. Between Galilee and Judea lay Samaria, so called from the city of Samaria

formerly the capital of the kingdom of the ten tribes; anciently inhabited by the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, and in our Saviour's time by a mixed people, consisting partly of such Jewish families as remained in the land, when the ten tribes were carried captive into Assyria by Shalmaneser, or of such as afterwards returned thither; and partly of those idolatrous people who were transplanted thither by the Assyrian king.

Between these Samaritans and the Jews there existed on the score of religion an inveterate and deep-rooted animosity; which showed itself particularly in the rival temple, built by the Samaritans on mount Gerizim for the centre of the true religion, and the place for the proper worship of God, as opposed to the temple of Jerusalem; and in the solemn feasts observed by the Samaritans, in rivalry of those of the Jews. On his journeys from Galilee to Jerusalem, it was necessary, as appears from the foregoing geographical sketch of the provinces, for our Lord to pass through the country of Samaria: and the purpose of his journeys being to attend the festivals celebrated in the temple of Jerusalem, his judgment was thus intimated concerning the preference due to the Jewish place and modes of worship above those of the rival Samaritans.

It was in the course of one of these journeys that our Lord was passing through the country of Samaria, and "sent messengers before his face; and they went and entered into a village of the Samaritans to make ready for him^b." His purpose of going to Jerusalem appears for the reasons already mentioned to have been regarded as an affront by the Samaritans, who inhospitably refused to receive and entertain him. This refusal excited the indignation of James and his brother John. They remembered, that on a particular occasion recorded in the Old Testament the divine power had been miraculously exerted for the protection of the prophet Elijah, and for the destruction of those by whom his safety was endangered^c; and they inquired, "Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, even as Elias did?" Our Lord repressed their indignation, and regulated their well-intentioned but ill-directed zeal by a gentle reproof, intimating their want of discernment in the application of the lessons which he had taught them, and the inconsistency of their proposal with the temper of the religion which he was come to establish in the world. "He turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not

^b Luke ix. 51—56. ^c 2 Kings i. 10.

what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." The proposal, if rashly made, was readily abandoned; the rebuke was received with submissive silence: and the two Apostles with their brethren passed on quietly in the train of their divine Master, and "went to another village."

An ignorance of the proper character of their Lord's religion shewed itself in our Apostle and his brother upon another occasion, related in the Gospel for the day; when, in common with their countrymen, possessed by high notions of the temporal grandeur of Messiah's kingdom, and ambitious of being admitted to stations of superior honour and pre-eminence under him, they prompted or permitted their mother to come before our Lord with an humble intreaty uttered in their presence; that he would "grant those her two sons to sit, the one on his right hand, and the other on the left, in his glory;" an intreaty, referring to the custom in earthly courts of giving precedence to persons of the first rank and dignity by seating them nearest to the person of the prince; and praying in effect that her two sons might have the privilege of enjoying a dignity, second only to that of Messiah himself.

How gentle was the rebuke of our Saviour!

how kind, and at the same time how penetrating, was his question ! Jesus, instead of replying to the mother, turned immediately to the Apostles, and answered and said, “Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with ?” alluding to that bitter cup of suffering, of which, in compliance with the awful dispensation of the Almighty, he was about to drink, and to that agonizing baptism, wherewith he was shortly to be baptized in his own blood. “They say unto him, We are able :” they probably perceived not the full import of the question ; or they presumed too confidently on their own resolution and strength. Our Lord accepted this tender of their readiness to partake in his sufferings ; and ratified it by a prediction of its fulfilment in their future destiny : at the same time referring them, upon the subject of their intreaty, to the general rules prescribed by God for the distribution of future glory and happiness. “He saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with ; but to sit on my right hand and on my left, is not mine to give, but for whom it is prepared of my Father.” The rest of the Apostles “were moved with indignation” at the request

of "the two brethren:" but our Lord allayed the storm, by discoursing to them on the duty of humility, which characterized his kingdom, as contradistinguished from the exercise of earthly dominion and authority; by encouraging them to shew their superiority to each other by mutual condescension; and by setting before them the example of himself "the Son of Man," who "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

The particular incidents, recorded in the Gospels as relating to St. James, have been mentioned in our notice of St. John, and need not be repeated. He is named as one of the eleven, who witnessed our Saviour's ascension, and afterwards partook of the effusion of the Holy Ghost: and he was subsequently a participator with the other Apostles in their labours and sufferings for the name of Jesus. But of the following passages of his life, until the occurrence of the event by which it was terminated, we have no certain account either from sacred or from ecclesiastical history.

If, as reported by an early writer quoted by Jerome, he preached to the dispersed Jews, the persons intended must be the Jewish converts dispersed in Judea after the martyrdom of St. Stephen. For in all probability his ministry was

confined to Judea; nor is there any reason to suppose, rather the accounts in the Acts of the Apostles contradict the supposition, that any one of the Apostles left Judea before the death of St. James. The Spanish writers indeed have generally contended, that our Apostle planted the Gospel in that country: and some writers have alleged, that from Spain he passed into Britain and Ireland. But of this opinion there are no traces in any ancient writers of good credit, nor at a period earlier than the middle ages of the Church: and upon the whole, though it has long been generally cherished among the people of Spain, who venerate him as their guardian Saint, it is now for the most part relinquished even by Popish writers^d.

St. James was called upon, at the distance of not many years from the period of his Lord's death, to fulfil his Lord's declaration, by drinking of the cup of which he had drunk, and being baptized with the baptism with which he had been baptized. His ardent and active temper, intimated probably by the honourable name of Boanerges, or sons of thunder, conferred on him and his brother by their Lord, prompted him no doubt to be forward, active, and resolute in

^d Dr. Cave, Dr. Lardner.

bearing testimony to the truth and excellence of his religion, and in urging it upon the belief and acceptance of others. "Possibly too, he had with a freedom not a little offensive spoken of the calamities coming upon the Jewish people, if they did not repent and believe in Jesus, as the Christ; as also John the Baptist had declared in his preaching, and Stephen in his^c." However this be, he became an object for the malice of Herod Agrippa, grandson of Herod the Great, the murderer of the infants at Bethlehem. This prince, having been made king of Judea by the Emperor Claudius, and being desirous of ingratiating himself with his new subjects, to whom the Christians were particularly obnoxious, "stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the Church, and killed James the brother of John with the sword^f." Thus fell "James the son of Zebedee," the first of the Apostles who was honoured with the crown of martyrdom: cheerfully drinking of that cup, which he had long since told his Lord he was able to drink of^g; and bidding fair for obtaining in a higher sense, than was at first intended, his petition of being allowed to sit on the right hand or on the left of Christ in his kingdom^h.

^c Dr. Lardner. ^f Acts xii. 1. ^g Dr. Cave. ^h Dr. Lardner.

An interesting anecdote is related of him by Eusebius on the authority of Clement of Alexandria; that, as the Apostle was led forth to the place of martyrdom, the soldier or officer who had guarded him to the tribunal, or rather his accuser, as Suidas expressly assures us, having been convinced by the wonderful courage and constancy of St. James during his trial, repented of his conduct, came and fell down at the Apostle's feet, and heartily intreated his forgiveness. The holy man, surprised at the occurrence, raised him up, embraced and kissed him, and said, "Peace, my son, peace be to thee, and the pardon of thy faults." Whereupon, in presence of the assembled people, the penitent publicly professed his belief in Christianity, and so was beheaded together with the Apostle.

There exists a story concerning the wonderful translation of St. James's body into Spain in a ship without oars, without a pilot or any to steer or conduct the voyage, which was performed only by the reliance of the sailors on the merits of the Apostle whose remains they carried with them; and concerning the final settlement of the body in a place, which is supposed to derive its name from the event in the appellation of, first, "*Ad Jacobum Apostolum*;" thence, in after times, "*Giacomo Postolo*;" and thence again, in the modified form of Com-

postella¹. This story may be well ranked among the figments of romance, or rather of a corrupt superstition; though there are not wanting those who profess to believe it, together with the incredible miracles reported to be performed at his tomb, where the Apostle's reliques are worshipped with the most solemn veneration to this day.

REFLEXIONS.

IN reflecting upon St. James's history, our attention may be first directed to that effusion of intemperate zeal, with which the Apostle, in concurrence with his brother, proposed to our blessed Lord the question, "Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?" That this question proceeded from attachment to their Master, and a jealousy for his honour, appears most probable from all the circumstances of the narrative. Some indeed have been of opinion, that the messengers sent by our Lord, to prepare entertainment for him, were these two disciples. If so, this proposal might be suspected to proceed as much from resentment of an injurious treatment of themselves, as of their Master. But the contrary opinion

¹ Dr. Cave.

is more agreeable to the circumstances of the case; and it appears better to attribute the proposal of the Apostles, to a zeal well-intentioned, but ill-understood and ill-regulated, for their Master's honour. That such was the character of their zeal, we certainly know from the gesture and language of our Lord himself in reply; for "he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them."

There is no quality of the mind, by which men, even good men, are more apt to be misled than zeal; particularly zeal in religion, "zeal of God," as St. Paul terms it^k. Where the object is good, the quality is of high value: "it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing;" and beyond controversy no object can be better, than the promotion of God's glory, and the furtherance of his religion. But it ought not to carry us beyond the bounds of moderation. It ought to be regulated by a correct knowledge of the nature and character of the religion, which we profess, and which we are desirous of furthering; and it ought to be brought into subjection to the dictates of that religion: a religion, not furious, fiery, implacable, cruel; but

^k Rom. x. 2.

“peaceable, gentle, easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy¹.” They who act for the furtherance of that religion in a manner inconsistent with its dictates, shew, as in the case of the Jews, that however sincere be their “zeal of God,” it is “not according to knowledge;” or, as in the case of St. James and his brother, that they “know not what manner of spirit they are of.” Every deviation from the rules of charity and brotherly love, of gentleness and forbearance, of meekness and patience, which our Lord prescribes to his disciples, however it may appear to be founded on an attachment to him and zeal for his service, is in truth a departure from the religion of Him, “the Son of man,” who “came not to destroy men’s lives, but to save them.”

But how gracious was the answer of our blessed Lord! How full of benignity and tenderness to the impatient and overheated disciples! How full of kindness, compassion, and affection for the lost race of mankind! Whilst it teaches us to estimate duly the character of his holy religion, let it prompt us to admire the excellency of him who is the Author of our faith; and to imitate his example, who, whether in his

¹ Jam. iii. 17.

general character of the Saviour of mankind, or in that of the Lord and Master, may we not say the brother and familiar friend, of his disciples, hath set before us a pattern of meekness and lowliness of heart!

The other occurrence, in which our Apostle was particularly concerned, may instruct us, not only in the spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom, but in the mode of procuring admission to its glories; namely, a conformity to his example. Our Saviour was petitioned, on behalf of the two brethren, the sons of Zebedee, that they might be permitted to sit, "the one on his right hand, and the other on his left, in his kingdom." But what was his answer? "Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" Conformity to the example of Christ is necessary, in order to our being admitted to the glories of his kingdom. In the case of the Apostles, and in the primitive ages of Christianity, that conformity was frequently required to be shewn in an especial manner by partaking of the sufferings which he himself endured in testimony of his truth. In some subsequent periods it has occasionally been required to be shewn by similar conduct. Sometimes however the sufferings, in which Christians are required to be conformed to the

example of their Saviour, are not the sufferings of persecution, but those only which are incidental to our nature : sometimes such conformity is required, less in any intense degree of suffering, than in a general imitation of the example of holiness which he has left us, and in a patient following of his steps through the ordinary duties of a sober, righteous, and godly life. And the Christian, who thus endeavours to be conformed to the image of his Saviour, by submitting with devout resignation to severer trials, if in the good pleasure of God severer trials await him ; or, if not, by patient continuance in well-doing ; may be said to drink of his Saviour's cup, and to be baptized with his baptism, and may cherish the consoling and animating hope of being admitted to a due station in his Saviour's heavenly kingdom.

The answer of the Apostles may seem to indicate a culpable degree of assurance and self-confidence, when in reply to their Lord's question, whether they were able to drink of his cup, and to be baptized with his baptism, they answered, " We are able." In extenuation of their apparent presumption it may be observed, that, as they were ignorant of the nature of Christ's kingdom, so they probably did not fully apprehend the purport of his question, and were ignorant of the extent of the sacrifice which

they might be called upon to undergo on their passage. By the grace of God however they were enabled to make good their undertaking. The name, which our Lord had bestowed upon them, when he first ordained them to the Apostolate, surnaming them "Sons of thunder," was in all probability a prophetic intimation of the resolution and courage, with which they should openly and boldly declare the great truths of the Gospel, when fully acquainted with them. The language of our Lord on this occasion appears to be a similar intimation. "Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with." He, who foretold their sufferings and their resolution, doubtless gave them grace and ability to suffer and to endure, to be bold and patient in his cause; submissive as they were to his reproofs, when necessary to be inflicted on them; and willing as they at all times were to be instructed and guided by his teaching. Without the grace of Christ, preventing and assisting us, we shall not be able to drink of Christ's cup and to be baptized with his baptism: but with his grace we shall be able. Submission and obedience to his will, accompanied by constant and fervent prayer to the throne of grace, will procure us the ability. If we be faithful and obedient, and put our

trust in God, "God is faithful who will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape that we may be able to bear it^m."

It may perhaps be thought, that the sequel of our Saviour's answer, "to sit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give; but it shall be given to them, for whom it is prepared of my Father," is hardly consistent with those notions, which the Scriptures continually give us of the dignity of the Son of God; as if the distribution of rewards in his kingdom of glory were a prerogative peculiar to the Father alone, and not in any way belonging to the Sonⁿ.

But, if such a thought occur, it may be satisfied by a correct understanding of the passage. For the passage is to be understood, with particular reference to its context: the answer is to be considered in relation to the question. The application, which occasioned it, was a request from the mother of James and John, as well as from themselves, that they might be admitted by our Lord to a particular distinction in his kingdom. It supposed, as the ground upon which it was founded, that our Lord would bestow such distinctions ab-

^m 1 Cor. x. 13.

ⁿ See Dean Stanhope.

solutely and arbitrarily; that he would bestow them from a feeling of partiality and fondness for his followers; that he would be moreover influenced in bestowing them by the importunity of friends and suitors. This erroneous supposition our Lord appears to have intended to remove; by answering his petitioners, that the distinctions, which they sought, were not to be distributed in such a manner, and upon such considerations, as they vainly imagined.

Further it should be remarked, that the words "it shall be given to them," are printed in a different character from the rest of the passage in our translation; and accordingly, that those words are not in the original passage, but are added by our translators. The passage without these words would run literally and correctly thus: "to sit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give, but" or except "for whom it is prepared of my Father:" as if he had said, "it is not mine to give it," as you suppose, by any absolute will of mine or any arbitrary selection of objects, by any undue partiality or fondness for the persons to be admitted, or out of any undue compliance with the solicitations of others; "but" it is mine to give it to those, "for whom it is prepared of my Father;" that is, to those, who have been most studious to do the will of the Father as re-

vealed by his beloved Son, and most solicitous to secure his blessing. For since we are perfectly assured, that "every man shall at the last day receive according to the things done in his body," it follows that the highest blessing is "prepared" for those, who shall be, by the most faithful exertions under the grace of God, the best "prepared" to receive them.

Every Christian shall then be exalted to a higher degree of bliss and glory, in proportion as he hath drunk deeper of Christ's cup. As his humility, his obedience, his sufferings, his patience, and his meek disposition, have brought him to a nearer conformity with his Master, so shall he be considered and be placed nearer him in happiness on that day, when "the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give a crown of righteousness unto all them that love his appearing;" and when the same Lord, even "the Son of man, shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, and shall sit upon the throne of his glory; and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another: and then shall the King say unto the righteous, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world^a." The

^a 2 Tim. iv. 8.

^r Matt. xxv. 31—34.

previous explanation of the words, addressed to the Saint of this day and his brother St. John by our blessed Lord, may be sufficient to show, that no exclusion of our Lord himself was intended from the distribution of heavenly rewards: whilst from such passages as the latter we may perceive, how important is the function which belongs to him in the conduct of such distribution; and what reverence is now due from us to Him, "at whose judgment-seat we must all appear" hereafter, "that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad[†]."

Collects.

"GRANT, O merciful God, that as thine holy Apostle Saint James, leaving his father and all that he had, without delay was obedient unto the calling of thy Son Jesus Christ, and followed him; so we, forsaking all worldly and carnal affections, may be evermore ready to follow thy holy commandments, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen*."

"ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who of thy tender love towards mankind hast sent thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, to take upon him

† 2 Cor. v. 10.

† Collect for the day. *

our flesh, and to suffer death upon the cross, that all mankind should follow the example of his great humility: Mercifully grant that we may both follow the example of his patience, and also be made partakers of his resurrection, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen*.”

“ **ALMIGHTY** God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light now in the time of this mortal life, in which thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility: that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious Majesty, to judge both the quick and dead, we may rise to the life immortal, through him who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, now and ever. *Amen*.”

• Collect for the Sunday next before Easter. ‘ Collect for the first Sunday in Advent.

AND couldst thou, JAMES, to win the meed
Of glory for his saints decreed,
Thy Saviour's cup of sorrow taste ?
And couldst thou bear, above thee spread,
The waves baptismal, dark and dread,
Which o'er thy Saviour past ?

Thou couldst : such aid his Spirit lent !
The stripes, the bonds, th' imprisonment,
The scornful look, the taunting word,
The angry council's stern decree,
The tyrant's rage and cruelty,
And last the fatal sword :

These came in turn ; and then thy death :
O thou, to wear a martyr's wreath
The first of all thy brotherhood !
First of thy Saviour's chosen train,
Like him the cup of woe to drain,
Like him baptiz'd in blood !

We dare not rend the veil aside,
By which the All-knowing wills to hide
The secrets of the unseen world :
But to our vision it should seem,
Might we without irreverence deem
Of that dark veil unfurl'd ;

Should seem that thou wert there to see,
O JAMES, O son of Zebedee,
And he, the favour'd of your Lord,
Martyr with thee at least in will ;
Together throned on God's high hill
Beside your King ador'd.

For not in vain his word was given,
That ye, who have through sufferings striven,
For him and for his Gospel known,
With him shall in his glory dwell,
And judge the tribes of Israel,
Throned by Messiah's throne.

Nor vain the word, that whosoe'er
Shall the Messiah's name prefer
To houses, parents, children, wife ;
Shall hundred-fold by Him be blest,
Be welcomed to his Father's rest,
And dwell in endless life.

ST. BARTHOLOMEW.

Bartholomew. MATT. x. 3.

Nathanael of Cana in Galilee. JOHN xxi. 2.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW.

BARTHOLOMEW, the Saint of this day, was most evidently one of the twelve Apostles, for he is expressly named as such in the catalogues of all the three Evangelists, who enumerate them. But there is no other mention of him by the same name in the evangelical history: a circumstance which applies to only one other of the twelve Apostles, namely, Simon Zelotes or the Canaanite.

This circumstance probably gave occasion to the opinion, that Bartholomew is spoken of in the Gospels under another name. That such is the case with some others of the Apostles is matter of notoriety: thus Simon is sometimes

called Simeon, at others Peter or Cephas; Judas the brother of James was also called Thaddæus or Lebbæus; Thomas, Didymus; and Matthew, Levi. And amongst the Evangelists "John whose surname was Mark" is indiscriminately distinguished in the sacred history by each of these appellations.

The other name, by which Bartholomew is supposed to be described, is that of Nathanael, whose first introduction to our Lord by Philip is related in the first chapter of St. John's Gospel: and it has been observed, that "as St. John never mentions Bartholomew in the number of the Apostles, so the other Evangelists never take notice of Nathanael, probably because they were the same person under two several names. And as in John Philip and Nathanael are joined together in their coming to Christ, so in the rest of the Evangelists Philip and Bartholomew are constantly put together without the least variation: for no other reason," as Dr. Cave conceives, "than because, as they were jointly called to the discipleship, so they are jointly reported in the Apostolical catalogue, as afterwards we find them joint companions in the writings of the Church." Indeed, if Bartholomew and Nathanael be not the same, there is no account at all of that Apostle: an omission however, which is not

peculiar to his case, but is common to him with some others of the body.

A consideration, by which this supposition is rendered still more probable, is that upon a remarkable occasion, when our Lord after his resurrection "shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias," as related by St. John, "there were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples." That by the phrase "the disciples" in this passage are meant the Apostles, has been concluded, partly from St. John's observation, "this is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to the disciples after he was risen from the dead," evidently pointing to two former appearances, when "the disciples" to whom he shewed himself were Apostles: and partly from the fact that the disciples here named were Apostles, the other two, who are not named, being generally understood to have been Andrew and Philip. Thus it appears reasonable to suppose, that Nathanael also was an Apostle; and, if so, he can have been no one but Bartholomew.

It has been further urged, in favour of the supposition concerning the identity of these two persons, that, if Nathanael had been no more than an ordinary disciple, no probable reason

can be given, why a person so distinguished as he, and so eminently qualified for the Apostolical office, should not have been appointed, equally well with either Barsabas or Matthias, as a candidate to supply the place of Judas ^a.

A further argument in favour of this supposition is derived from the name of Bartholomæus or Bartholomew, which does not appear like a proper name, any more than Bar Jona is the proper name of Peter, but rather imports his relation to some other person. Thus it may denote him to have been the son of Tholomæus or Tholomew, Tholmai according to the original form of the word; a name, not uncommon among the Jews, and of which an instance is mentioned by the historian Josephus in his *Antiquities* ^b: it being customary with them for a son thus to derive a name from his father, as Bar Jona, the son of Jona; Bar Timæus the son of Timæus; and in some cases for a person to be usually called by this derivative rather than by his proper name, as Joseph was called Barsabas^c, and Barnabas, who however derived his name from a different source, was constantly so styled, although his right name was Joses ^d.

From these considerations it appears by no means improbable, that St. John and the other

^a Dr. Cave.

^b Dr. Nicholls.

^c Acts i. 23.

^d Acts iv. 36.

Evangelists, speaking respectively of Nathanael and Bartholomew, intend to speak of one and the same person : the former describing him by his proper name, the others by his patronymick or paternal appellation. And accordingly this opinion, although it does not appear to have been held by the ancient writers of the Church, yet having been advanced by Rupertus, who wrote about the year 1130, and having been espoused by many learned men after him, is generally entertained by modern authors^c.

Of the parentage of St. Bartholomew we know no more than his patronymick imports ; though he has been sometimes represented to have been a Syrian of noble extraction, and to have derived his pedigree from the Ptolomies, kings of Egypt, upon no other ground, as it should seem, than the mere analogy and sound of the name^f.

He has also been supposed to have been skilled in the Jewish law, and even to have been a doctor of it : a supposition founded on the narrative concerning Nathanael in St. John's first chapter. But indeed there appears no sufficient reason from that narrative for attributing to him any greater skill in the law than to Philip, or than to Andrew and Simon Peter : concerning whom may be remarked the same

^c Dr. Nicholls, Mr. Wheatley.

^f Dr. Cave.

thing which Dr. Lardner has remarked concerning the sons of Zebedee, that "no doubt they, as the children of all pious Jews at that time, were well acquainted with the Scriptures of the Old Testament. They had read them, and had heard them read and explained in the synagogues. They had also been accustomed to go to Jerusalem at the feasts, and had discoursed with many upon the things of religion. They now were in expectation of the appearing of the Messiah, foretold in the law and the prophets; but undoubtedly were in the common prejudice of the nation, that it would be, in part at least, a worldly kingdom."

The Scriptures do not expressly state the way of life of Bartholomew: though from the incident related concerning Nathanael in the twentieth chapter of St. John's Gospel, it is probable that, like the sons of Jona and Zebedee, he was a fisherman on the sea of Galilee. The particulars of his being first brought to the knowledge and presence of Jesus are recorded by the same Apostle and Evangelist in his first chapter. On being apprized by Philip, "We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph," he met the intelligence with an objection, founded, as it should appear, on the bad character of Nazareth, as well as on

his knowledge from the Prophets that Christ should be born at Bethlehem, and he said, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Nevertheless he readily complied with the invitation of Philip to satisfy himself by his own personal inspection and inquiries. On his approach, our Lord saluted him with this honourable character, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" Surprised by this compellation from one, who was a stranger to him, he expressed his astonishment; and received such an answer as convinced him of the real character of Jesus, who, under the simple observation recorded by the Evangelist, "Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee," probably conveyed to the inquirer some indication of a more than human knowledge and of a divine nature; and he accordingly exclaimed, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel." Our Lord received this acknowledgment of his conviction with an assurance, that, whatever proofs of his superhuman knowledge and character he had now communicated to his new disciple, he would in the sequel communicate greater and still more convincing proofs; no less than if he should "see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of

man:" an assurance, which the disciple no doubt saw fully accomplished in his subsequent attendance upon his Lord.

Of any particulars concerning St. Bartholomew, derived from the sacred history, except such as have been already specified, we know nothing, with the sole addition of his being mentioned by St. Luke as one of the witnesses of our Lord's ascension, and with the rest a partaker of the miraculous effusion of the Holy Spirit. After the dispersion of the Apostles, his ministry is said to have been exercised in India, Lycaonia, and the greater Armenia; but in what order he visited these several countries, is not agreed.

The evidence of his having been in India is derived from the historian Eusebius: who relates, that towards the end of the second century Pantænus of Alexandria, a man celebrated for his knowledge of philosophy, especially of the institutions of the Stoicks, but much more for his hearty affection to Christianity, having been led by his zeal for the propagation of the Gospel into the East as far as India, he there found some knowledge yet retained of Christ; and together with it a copy of St. Matthew's Gospel in Hebrew, which according to tradition had been left there by St. Bartholomew, one of the twelve Apostles, when he

preached the Gospel to the eastern nations, and had been preserved with great care as an invaluable treasure. This India is by Jerome called "the Fortunate:" and by Socrates, the ecclesiastical historian, is distinguished as the "India bordering on Ethiopia:" "meaning no doubt," says Dr. Cave, "the Asian Ethiopia, conterminous to, if not the same as, Chaldæa." He adds, that, in the distribution of the world among the Apostles, this part fell to the lot of St. Bartholomew, and some writers assert, that he came at last to this country, and there finished his course.

Chrysostom informs us, that he instructed the Lycaonians, and trained them up in the Christian discipline. He is also said to have been engaged with Philip at Hierapolis in Phrygia, in convincing the people of the folly of their idolatrous practices, and in leading them to the knowledge of the Gospel; and to have narrowly escaped martyrdom, to which, in company with his brother Apostle, he had been devoted by the enraged magistrates.

Similar exertions and similar dangers are attributed to him in the greater Armenia. St. Jerome expressly asserts, that he died and was buried at Albanopolis, a city in that country; having cheerfully undergone a sentence of crucifixion from the governor, and comforting and

confirming the Gentile converts to the last minute of his life. By some writers it has been added, that he was crucified with his head downwards: by others, that he was flayed alive before crucifixion. These indeed are more modern accounts, and should seem therefore to be less worthy of credit. That crucifixion however in that posture, for the aggravation of the torture, was sometimes practised, we have already had occasion to remark in our notice of St. Peter: and with respect to the other practice, Dr. Cave has observed, "the previous taking off of the skin might well enough consist with his crucifixion, excoriation being a punishment in use not only in Egypt, but amongst the Persians, next neighbours to these Armenians, as the Roman historian Ammianus Marcellinus assures us; and Plutarch in his life of Artaxerxes records a particular instance of Mesabates, the Persian eunuch, being first flayed alive, and then crucified."

To the stories of the removal of his body after death, first to Daras, a city on the borders of Phrygia, then to Lipari, one of the Æolian islands, thence to Beneventum in Italy, and thence finally to Rome, we may well judge that little credit is due: nor is any due to a fabulous Gospel, which was forged under his name, but which has been justly branded as apo-

cryphal, unworthy the name and patronage of an Apostle.

REFLEXIONS.

OUR reflexions on the Saint of this day will proceed on the supposition, the validity of which has been already examined, of the identity of Bartholomew and Nathanael, who is offered to our notice under the honourable character assigned to him by our Lord, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile."

As "an Israelite indeed" he appears before us in the light of one, who did not value himself on those external privileges, of which he and his countrymen were possessed; on his descent from Abraham the father of the faithful, and on his participation of the rite of circumcision, which intitled him to the privileges of the Jewish covenant: but he is to be regarded as having rather followed the lively faith, and as having done the works, of Abraham; and as having sought that inward holiness, of which circumcision and the other rites of the Jewish Church were figures; according to that plain exposition of St. Paul in his Epistle to the Romans, "He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the

heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God^s." And accordingly from this particular of his character we may be admonished, that he, who would bear the character of a Christian indeed, must not be contented with merely calling himself a Christian; or with having been admitted into the family of Christ, and having partaken of the sacrament of baptism: but must remember, that when he was "received into the congregation of Christ's flock" he was "signed with the sign of the cross, in token that thereafter he should not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under his banner, against sin, the world, and the devil, and to continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto his life's end:" and must further "remember always," as the Church hath failed not to admonish him, "that Baptism doth represent unto us our profession, which is, to follow the example of our Saviour Christ, and to be made like unto him; that, as he died and rose again for us, so should we, who are baptized, die from sin, and rise again unto righteousness, continually mortifying all our evil and corrupt affections, and daily proceeding in all virtue and godliness of living." Without bear-

^s Rom. ii. 28, 29.

ing these things in mind, and without acting consistently on this persuasion, the Christian, whatever he may call and esteem himself, cannot be properly considered "a Christian indeed."

It was another feature in our Apostle's character, that "in him was no guile:" that he possessed a heart, to which deceit and fraud were strangers, and which was occupied on the contrary by sincerity and truth; and that his behaviour was accordingly exempt from hypocrisy and dissimulation, and marked by ingenuousness, frankness, and simplicity. What a character to have received from him who "trieth the heart;" and of whom one of his Apostles has thought it worthy to be mentioned as a memorable quality even in his blameless character, that, as "he did no sin," so "there was no guile found in his mouth^b." Such an ingredient was necessary in the formation of the character of "an Israelite indeed." "Truly," saith the Psalmist, "God is loving unto Israel, even unto such as are of a clean heart." And can one be "a Christian indeed" without it? Surely not, unless we have been in vain admonished to let our "love be without dissimulation;" and to imitate the example, and follow the steps, of him "in whose mouth was no guile."

^b 1 Pet. ii, 22.

The guilelessness of Nathanael's character shewed itself in his communication with Philip, who announced to him the discovery of "him, of whom Moses in the law, and the Prophets, did write," in the person of "Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph." Speaking under the influence of a prepossession, which appears to have been by no means peculiar to himself, but to have been partaken by him in common with others of his nation, Nathanael demanded "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" But he nevertheless made no hesitation in complying with Philip's invitation to satisfy himself by his own personal inspection and inquiry; and the result was that, which will generally ensue, when simplicity and sincerity are applied to the investigation of divine truth; namely, a confession from the inquirer, that he was convinced of the sufficiency of the pretensions of Jesus. For Jesus having by his conversation given him reason to be satisfied of the truth of his pretensions, "Nathanael answered and said unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel."

Previously to a careful investigation of divine truth, prepossessions may have occupied our minds, and indisposed us for their reception. Such prepossessions may stand in the way of our believing the divine claims of our

holy religion: they may stand in the way of our believing aright. Before a careful and impartial investigation, under the blessing of divine grace, such objections will in all probability vanish: and we shall become believers, true believers, in the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. But in order to such a desirable consummation guilelessness of heart and mind is one of the most essential qualifications. Such a qualification will make us willing to believe: it will incline us to receive the truth, and to admit all reasonable evidence in its support: and it will render us disinclined for the crooked artifices of sophistry, by which the progress of truth is wont to be impeded. And so we may be induced to believe, and to believe as we ought to do: to acknowledge with Philip, that "Jesus of Nazareth is he, of whom Moses in the Law, and the Prophets, did write;" and to address ourselves to the same Jesus in the language of Nathanael, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel."

It will not be taking us much out of our way, and it will be affording an useful and pleasing instance of the effect of such a candid examination into the truth of our holy religion, if we remark upon the history of a distinguished character, a nobleman of high political station

and eminent literary attainments, who had at one period of his life a very unsettled belief in revealed religion; but, having devoted his mind to the subject with seriousness and candour, rose from the inquiry with a judgment convinced and satisfied. Of this person it is related by his biographer, Dr. Johnson, that "he had, in the pride of juvenile confidence, with the help of corrupt conversation, entertained doubts of the truth of Christianity; but he thought the time now come, when it was no longer fit to doubt or believe by chance, and applied himself seriously to the great question. His studies, being honest, ended in conviction. He found that religion was true; and what he had learned he endeavoured to teach by 'Observations on the conversion and Apostleship of St. Paul;' a treatise, to which infidelity has never been able to fabricate a specious answer." To this fact the noble person himself bore the most delightful testimony at the close of life in conversation with a confidential friend: "When I first set out in life," said he, "I had friends who endeavoured to shake my belief in the Christian religion. I saw difficulties which staggered me, but I kept my mind open to conviction. The evidences and doctrines of Christianity, studied with attention, made me a most firm and persuaded believer

of the Christian religion. I have made it the rule of my life, and it is the ground of my future hopes."

We return to the case of Nathanael, and we observe, that as the character, attributed to him by our Lord, may be our example in the investigation of divine truth, so the promise made to him by the same high authority may be our encouragement. "Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig-tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these. And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man."

The promise was fulfilled, even in its literal meaning, by those visible ministrations of celestial visitants, which occasionally attested to the disciples the divine mission of their Lord. More generally, perhaps, by the testimonies of divine power which attended him, independently of any special visible interposition of the heavenly messengers. At all events the faith of Nathanael was rewarded by his being admitted to fuller proofs of the Messiahship, the sovereignty, and the divinity of Jesus. To those portions of divine knowledge, which we possess, we may cherish the hope, that, pro-

vided we duly entertain them, continual accessions will be made. Even in this life we may trust, that our faith, being duly encouraged, will become clearer and stronger; till it receive its final consummation in that future state, when "the things now hoped for" shall be realised in enjoyment; and "the things now not seen," otherwise than by the evidence of faith, shall be rendered visible in the presence of our Creator, our Redeemer, and our Sanctifier, one God, blessed for evermore. Amen.

Collects.

"O ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who didst give to thine Apostle Bartholomew grace truly to believe and to preach thy word; Grant, we beseech thee, unto thy Church to love that word which he believed, and both to preach and receive the same, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen*!"

"ALMIGHTY God, who hast given us thy only-begotten Son to take our nature upon him, and to be born of a pure Virgin; Grant that we being regenerate, and made thy children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by thy Holy Spirit, through the same our Lord Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with thee

¹ Collect for the day.

and the same Spirit, one God, world without end. *Amen*^k."

"ALMIGHTY Father, who hast given thine only Son to die for our sins, and to rise again for our justification; Grant us so to put away the leaven of malice and wickedness, that we may alway serve thee in pureness of living and truth, through the merits of the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen*^l."

^k Collect for Christmas day.
Sunday after Easter.

^l Collect for the First

"BEHOLD, in whom no guile I find,
An Israelite indeed!"
NATHANAEL, thus thy virtuous mind
Did Israel's sovereign read.

His eyes the heart and reins explore;
He sees each secret wile:
He scann'd thy inmost bosom o'er,
And spoke thee free from guile.

A guileless heart! what fairer scene
In all this world below,
Does nature's loveliness contain,
Or God's creation shew?

Fair are the snow-wreaths, that infold
Yon Alpine mountain's head;
Fair is the stream, all crystal, roll'd
Clear o'er its pebbly bed;

Fair is the star of evening bright,
A gem in heaven's blue zone;
And fair the moonlight's robe of white,
O'er earth's green surface thrown:

But Alpine snow, nor crystal stream,
Can pure delight impart,
Nor moon, nor evening planet's gleam,
To match the guileless heart.

For these material works of God
Of Him memorials stand,
And tell the Maker's power abroad,
The wonders of his *hand*:

But guileless truth and innocence,
By God to men consign'd,
Reflect his moral excellence,
An image of his *mind*.

ST. MATTHEW.

Matthew the publican. MATT. x. 3.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE OF ST. MATTHEW.

THE Saint, who is the subject of the Church's commemoration this day, is distinguished from his brethren in the apostleship by two remarkable circumstances: by the situation, which he occupied previously to his becoming a follower of our Lord, a situation peculiar to himself alone; and by the union, which he exemplifies in his own person, of the office of an evangelist or recorder in writing of the Gospel of our Lord, with that of an Apostle or primitive preacher of the Gospel; an union which he participates with only one other of the Apostles of our Lord. By which latter character, namely, that of uniting in his own person the functions of an Apostle and an Evangelist, he is distinguished likewise from the other Evangelists, St. Mark and St. Luke.

The passages in the sacred history, which make mention of St. Matthew, are not numerous; and of course the particulars recorded of him are few, though important. He is first offered to our notice as a publican, or toll-gatherer, under the Romans, "sitting at the receipt of custom^a," or probably in the place appropriated for the receipt of it; and thus occupied in the business of his office, which "seems more particularly to have consisted in gathering the customs of commodities that came by the sea of Galilee, and the tribute which passengers were to pay that went by water^b." The name, by which he describes himself in his history of this occurrence, and by which he is now universally known in the Christian Church, as well as the name of Levi, by which he is denominated in the parallel portions of St. Mark's and St. Luke's Gospels^c; (for we may take it for granted, although it has not been altogether free from question, that the same individual is intended in these several narratives;) the two names then of Matthew and of Levi shew, that he was purely of Jewish extraction and origin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews, although a Roman officer^d; and therefore not invested with that office

^a Matt. ix. 9. ^b Dr. Cave. ^c Mark ii. 14. Luke v. 27.
^d Dr. Cave.

of honourable reputation and superior power and credit, the holder of which was also called "a publican," and which was not commonly bestowed upon any person of a degree lower than that of a Roman knight; but that he was employed in that inferior and less reputable station, to which native Jews were appointed by the superior Roman officers, in the quality of their deputies and servants, as persons best skilled in the usages, and best fitted to manage the affairs, of their own country^e. Occupied in the business of this his office, "Matthew the publican" was remarked by our blessed Lord, as he passed by the way, who said unto him, "Follow me: and he arose, and left all," as is added in St. Luke's narrative, "and followed him."

The next particular recorded of Matthew is his entertainment of our Saviour at a feast, together with a great company of publicans and others^f, probably our new convert's former associates; who now appear to have been invited or admitted to the feast, to do honour probably to Jesus, to testify his own gratitude for the spiritual blessing which had been conferred upon him, and to afford his companions

^e Dr. Nicholls.

^f Luke v. 29.

a convenient opportunity of profiting by the conversation and instruction of our Lord. It is of no great importance to inquire minutely on such an occasion as the present, whether this entertainment was given immediately upon the Apostle's call, or after some considerable interval : though indeed it appears most probable, that the narrative, which insues, both in the Gospel of St. Matthew and in those of the other two Evangelists who relate it, immediately upon the narrative of the call, refers to an occurrence which took place not till some weeks or some months after[§]. It is of more importance for us to observe, that the entertainment, whenever it took place, afforded a fit occasion for our blessed Lord to manifest his wisdom and his goodness ; to rebuke the malicious censures of the Pharisees, who were offended and murmured at his being found in such company ; and to justify himself for extending his gracious invitations to repentance, and his merciful proffers of spiritual health, to those hated and despised persons, whom their brother publican Matthew was now the instrument of presenting to their Saviour.

It is somewhat remarkable, that St. Matthew,

[§] Dr. Doddridge.

who in the order of narration is the fifth or sixth of those Apostles, whose call is particularly related, is also the last of those who are so distinguished: the only Apostles, whose call is related before his, being Peter and Andrew, and the two sons of Zebedee, and perhaps Philip also; and no other call being related after his. It has, probably for that reason, been observed, that at the time of his call "only one room in the number of the Apostles was left void for a future occupant^b;" and that "St. Matthew was the last calledⁱ." But there appears no authority for the observation: besides, there may have been opportunities for calling others in the interval between the calling of Matthew and the sending forth of the twelve, as well as in the period previous to the former of these two events: and perhaps it might as reasonably be inferred, that the call of Matthew took place the seventh or eighth in order of the twelve, from the circumstance of his name occupying those places in the catalogues of the intire number, the seventh in the enumeration of St. Mark and St. Luke, the eighth in his own enumeration. But, however this be, it is certain that Matthew, whenever selected, was one of those twelve, whom our Lord "chose and ordained and named Apostles,"

^a Bp. Hall.^b Dr. Nicholls.

“that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach;” and whom he accordingly did “send forth, and commanded them to preach the kingdom of God,” and gave them power and commission to “heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils^k.”

Thus ordained an Apostle, St. Matthew no doubt continued to act with his brethren in the Apostolate, and to take his part in the several transactions recorded of them in the sequel of the Gospel history; though there is no express mention made of him in any subsequent portion of the Gospels, and he is only once mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, namely, in the commencement of the book, where the eleven are enumerated as assembled together after our Lord's ascension. But, although not subsequently mentioned, there can be no doubt from the same sacred record that he continued to preach the Gospel for a considerable period in company with the other Apostles in Jerusalem and Judea; bearing his testimony in common with theirs to the resurrection of Jesus; and confirming his testimony by the shame and persecution which he gladly suffered together with them for the name of Jesus, and by the miracles,

^k Matt. x. 8. Mark iii. 14. Luke vi. 13.

which God enabled him to perform in that holy name.

The time of his continuance amongst his own countrymen has been variously stated; the opinions fluctuating from as early a date as the eighth, to as late an one as the seventeenth or eighteenth, year after our Lord's ascension, or even to a later period¹. In the general dispersion of the Apostles over the different regions of the earth, it is agreed that St. Matthew partook of the same lot with his brethren: but what province was specially assigned to him, and where or when or how he terminated his ministry and his life, are questions by no means clear. Parthia and Ethiopia are mentioned with the greatest probability as the scenes of his apostolical labours; and each of these countries has been particularised as the scene of his death. Of accounts, thus at variance with each other, uncertainty is the obvious consequence.

The same consequence results from the traditions concerning the character of his death; for whilst by some authors he is represented to have suffered martyrdom, but by what kind of death they signify to be altogether uncertain, by others again he is supposed to have died a natural death. For the former opinion Socrates,

¹ Dr. Cave, Dean Stanhope, Dr. Lardner.

an ecclesiastical historian of the fourth century, appears to be the best authority^m. On the other hand, as a writer of great industry and research has remarked, "Heracleon, a learned Valentinian in the second century, as cited by Clement of Alexandria, reckons Matthew among those Apostles, who did not die by martyrdom: nor does Clement contradict him. It is also observable, that Chrysostom has a commendation of Matthew, consisting of divers articles: his humility; mercifulness or liberality; piety; general benevolence; writing a gospel; finally, fortitude, inasmuch as 'he came from the presence of the council rejoicing;' referring, we may suppose, to the end of the fifth chapter of the Acts; but he says nothing of his martyrdom. Which," adds Dr. Lardner, "may induce us to think, that there was not any tradition about it among Christians at that time, or that it was not much regarded."

With respect to the Gospel of St. Matthew also, considerable difference of opinion has prevailed; not as to its genuineness and authenticity, but as to its date and its original language: as to its date, whether it was written as early as the 38th or as late as the 64th year of the Christian era, that is, whether about eight

^m Bp. Tomline.

or twenty-six years after our Lord's ascension; or, it may be, at some intervening period^a: and as to its language, whether it was originally written in Hebrew or in Greek; and, if in the former language, by whom it was translated into the latter.

The decision of the first of these questions appears to be connected with that of one, to which allusion was lately made; namely, St. Matthew's departure from Judea on the general dispersion of the Apostles into the different regions of the world: for many ancient Christian writers have related, that our Apostle, "having preached for some time in Judea, was requested by the believers there to leave with them in writing, before he went away, a history of what he had taught by word of mouth:" and his Gospel was the consequence of that request. The most reasonable supposition on this point appears to be, that the writing of it was not postponed till a very late period after our Lord's ascension^b; there being evident occasion for an early written account of our Lord's life and ministry, (and of the four Gospels St. Matthew's is the earliest;) and that, for which there was occasion, not being likely to be long withheld: a supposition this, not contradicted by positive

^a Dr. Townson, Dr. Lardner.

^b Bp. Tomline.

external evidence^p, nor at variance with, but rather supported by, internal evidence supplied by the Gospel itself^q.

As to the original language of the Gospel; in the judgment of some learned writers it has been held to have been Hebrew, agreeably to the general testimony of ecclesiastical antiquity, which in a matter of fact is a consideration of prime importance; and agreeably also to the supposed purpose, for which it was primarily written; namely that of giving information to persons of the Jewish nation; a purpose, which is supposed to have been in the particular contemplation of the writer, from the abundant references which his Gospel contains to matters most familiar to the minds, and most interesting to the feelings, of the Jews^r. But who was the translator of it into Greek, is even according to those who hold this judgment extremely doubtful^s; although there have not been wanting some, who have attributed the translation, perhaps with no great appearance of reason, to so high an authority as that of St. John or St. James the Less.

On the contrary in the judgment of other learned men it has been held, that the Gospel

^p Dr. Doddridge. ^q Dr. Townson. ^r Bishop Tomline. ^s Dr. Lardner.

of St. Matthew, which we possess, was written originally in Greek : that the testimony of antiquity concerning a Hebrew original is vague and questionable¹ : but that even admitting the plainness and validity of such testimony, and allowing a Gospel to have been first written by St. Matthew in Hebrew, it does not follow but that there may have been a Greek Gospel written by him likewise² : further, that supposing and taking it for granted, that St. Matthew wrote for the Jews in Judea, there is no weight in that reason for concluding that he wrote in Hebrew, for the Greek language was at that time much used throughout the whole Roman empire, and particularly in Judea³, and was indeed in the time of Christ and his Apostles really the universal language⁴ : that, as not only the rest of the Evangelists, but also the Apostles, Peter, James, John, Jude, and Paul, wrote all their Epistles in Greek, to Christians, whether Jews or Gentiles, throughout the known world ; and as Matthew's Gospel was designed for universal dissemination, not less than theirs ; it is unlikely that it was originally written in any other language than that employed by all the other writers of the New Testament⁵ : that

¹ Dr. Lardner.² Dr. Townson.³ Dr. Lardner.⁴ Dr. Jortin.⁵ Dr. Hales.

there are not in our Greek Gospel of St. Matthew any marks of its being a translation from another language^a: but that there are numerous and remarkable instances of *verbal* agreement between him and the other Evangelists, which, on the supposition that he wrote in Hebrew, or the vernacular Syro-Chaldaick dialect, would not be credible^b; since even they who maintain that opinion are forced to confess, that an early Greek translation of his Gospel existed before Luke and Mark wrote theirs; which they saw and consulted.

In estimating the grounds of these two judgments, we may perhaps see cause to adopt a middle course, as suggested by Dr. Townson; who, having cited the affirmations of several ancient writers, "that St. Matthew wrote his Gospel in Hebrew, the truth of which point has been much questioned or rather denied by learned moderns, who contend that he wrote in Greek," concludes, that "there seems more reason for allowing two originals, than for contesting either; the consent of antiquity pleading strongly for the Hebrew, and evident marks of originality for the Greek. There are instances," he adds, "of authors, who have themselves published the same work in two languages. So Josephus

^a Dr. Lardner^b Dr. Hales.

wrote the History of the Jewish War. And as St. Matthew wanted not ability nor disposition, we cannot think he wanted inducement, to 'do the work of an Evangelist' for his brethren of the common faith, Hellenists as well as Hebrews, to both of whom charity made him a debtor. The popular language of the first believers was Hebrew, what is called so by the sacred and ancient ecclesiastical writers; but they who spoke Greek quickly became a considerable part of the Church of Christ."

After all, there is no doubt that different persons will continue, as they long have continued, to decide differently on this much litigated question: but whatever be our decision upon it, we must feel great satisfaction in being assured, that the genuineness and authenticity of the Gospel which we possess, whether original or translated, are not affected by the decision. From the earliest times it was universally received in the Christian Church; nor does its genuineness appear to have been controverted by any profane author^c. Upon this subject the language of one of the learned writers, who contend for the original having been in Hebrew, is not unworthy of attention; where, having alleged such to be the fact upon

^c Bp. Tomline, Bp. Percy.

the ground of the "universal and uncontrollable assertion of all antiquity," he adds, "It was no doubt soon after translated into Greek, though by whom St. Jerome professes he could not tell: Theophylact says it was reported to have been done by St. John, but Athanasius more expressly attributes the translation to St. James the Less. The best is, it matters not much, whether it was translated by an Apostle or some disciple, so long as the Apostles approved the version, and that the Church has ever received the Greek copy for authentick, and reposed it in the sacred Canon. And therefore when the late Arian advocate brings in one of his party challenging the divine authority of this Gospel, because but a translation, he might have remembered it is such a translation, as hath all the advantages of an original, as being translated while the Apostles were yet in being to surpervise and ratify it, and whose authority has always been held sacred and inviolable by the whole Church of God^d."

REFLEXIONS.

HAVING thus surveyed the Saint of the day historically, we proceed to such reflexions as

^d Dr. Cave.

a contemplation of his history appears best calculated to supply.

And first, we may observe, that the calling of Matthew by our Saviour is an illustration of the wisdom and power of God. Matthew was a publican: as such, he was disesteemed and despised by the Jews. He became an Apostle; and thus, by his instrumentality, both Jews and Gentiles were converted to a belief and acknowledgment of the Gospel. The inference may be best conveyed in the language of St. Paul to the Corinthians, to which we have already had occasion to refer in considering the calling of some other Apostles; "ye see your calling, brethren; how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence."

The calling of Matthew is also an illustration of the grace of God. The office which he bore was so odious amongst his countrymen, and gave so much occasion for injustice and op-

pression, that the names of publicans and sinners were usually joined together, "as if he who was a publican by profession was sure to be a sinner by life." It does not appear from the Gospel narrative, that we have any particular reason to suppose, that Matthew had been especially a sinner. He may have been originally less exorbitant in his employment, than his brethren in office were generally supposed to be: or he may have listened to the instructions of our Lord's forerunner, and, while he sat at the receipt of custom, have observed the Baptist's precept, of "exacting no more than that which was appointed him." Still the general association in the minds of his countrymen would cause them to rank him amongst sinners, as was the case with respect to those of his profession, who assembled afterwards at the entertainment in his house: and thus the calling of Matthew the publican to be a follower of Christ and a preacher of his Gospel is, according to their views more especially, an instance of the divine mercy and compassion of the Saviour, who "came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

But the grace of God is further illustrated

by its effects, in causing Matthew to obey the call, and in conforming his mind and life to the instructions of him who called him.

He believed and therefore he obeyed. The grounds of his belief, under the influence of divine grace, doubtless were the miracles and the discourses of our Lord. His call appears to have been immediately consequent upon our Lord's miraculous cure of the paralytick, followed by an assertion of his authority to forgive sins. But moreover we cannot suppose, that Matthew was before wholly unacquainted with our Saviour's power or doctrine, dwelling as he did at Capernaum, the place of Christ's usual residence, and the continual scene of his wonderful works and instructions; by which he could not but have been in some measure prepared to receive the impression, now made upon him by our Lord's command. These, we presume, were the means, which were designed by the divine Providence to convince him of the character of him who called him: and these, operating by the divine blessing on "an honest and good heart," made him faithful and obedient to the call.

And yet there were powerful impediments to his compliance presented by his former way of life. He had much to sacrifice in a worldly

view, nothing to gain^f. He was rich, and had a wealthy and thriving trade; "the great feast," which he afterwards "made in his own house" for our Saviour, is a proof of his previous condition; he was a person too of prudence and discretion, for such as were deficient in those qualities were not likely to be employed in his office; so that doubtless he understood the cost of complying with this new appointment, that he must exchange wealth for poverty, the house of custom for a prison, prosperous and opulent employers for a naked and despised Saviour, who made no scruple of declaring, that "he had not where to lay his head." But in a spiritual view he had every thing to gain. He overlooked therefore all worldly considerations: he renounced his secular connexions, and his projects and prospects of worldly interest: he determined in spite of all these temptations thenceforth to attach and devote himself to the Saviour: and with that determination, "he arose, and left all, and followed him."

The entertainment, subsequently given by the new convert to his Master, is a very pleasing incident. It shews that he regarded with complacency and satisfaction the choice

^f Dr. Cave.

which he had made. It testifies at the same time a disposition to do honour to the Saviour, whose disciple he had become : and a desire to introduce his former associates to the same spiritual blessings, of which by the grace of God he had himself been made a partaker. Thus it exhibits St. Matthew to our esteem, as a thankful and contented, as a pious and benevolent man.

Other Christian graces are illustrated by his subsequent conduct. It has been considered, probably with reason, as a mark of modesty and humility, of candour and ingenuousness, in our Apostle, that he describes himself in terms different from those employed by the other Evangelists. Whereas in relating his call, they speak of him by the name of Levi, a name by which he was probably known in early life^a; he speaks of himself by the name of Matthew, the name by which he was latterly and universally known : thus identifying himself with the Publican, who sate at the receipt of custom, and avoiding the possibility of his not being recollected as a person formerly engaged in a vile and dishonourable course of life^b.

To the same effect it has likewise been observed, that whereas the other two Evangelists,

^a Dr. Lardner.

^b Dr. Cave.

in their catalogues of the twelve Apostles, describe our Apostle simply by the name of Matthew; that which has aptly been represented as "his apostolical name," without mention of his former occupation; he in his own catalogue describes himself with the circumstance of his former occupation appended to his name, and reminds us that he was "Matthew the publicanⁱ." They may have forborne the mention of his previous employment out of tenderness and charity. He probably inserted it, for the purpose of setting forth his own unworthiness, and thus magnifying the grace of God and the condescension and loving-kindness of the Redeemer.

Again, to the same effect, whereas the other Evangelists in their catalogues, describing the Apostles by pairs, place Matthew before Thomas, he in his own catalogue places Thomas before himself, giving the preference to his fellow-Apostle as his superior; thus appearing of small value in his own conceit, and in honour preferring others before himself^k.

These good qualities of our Apostle may be further exemplified by his silence as well as by his speech; by circumstances which he has

ⁱ Dr. Townson, Dean Stanhope.
Dr. Townson.

^k Dr. Cave,

omitted in his narrative, as well as by those which he has introduced. He mentions indeed, that, when he was called by Christ, "he arose and followed him;" but he does not mention, as St. Luke does, that in order to follow him, "he left all¹." He mentions, that "Jesus sate at meat in the house," but he does not add the occasion, namely, that he "made him a great feast in his own house;" a particular, of which we are informed by St. Luke, from whom alone we learn the care of our Apostle in providing the entertainment, and that it was his house which was thus honoured by our Lord's presence. There is no other occasion, on which St. Matthew has taken particular notice of himself. True it is that he is not elsewhere named by the other Evangelists: but it is no less true, that an historian of a self-sufficient and vain-glorious spirit in the course of his narrative might have found, or made, opportunities enough for distinguishing himself from the number of the Apostles in general, and for magnifying his own importance and contributing to his own honour.

Of St. Matthew, in his apostolical character, there is need for little to be observed. Nothing peculiar is recorded of him, either in sacred or

¹ Dr. Townson.

in ecclesiastical history, to distinguish him from his brethren in the apostleship; so that there is no room for peculiar reflexions, and for others of a general nature opportunities have already occurred. Suffice it therefore to remark in brief, that, as he followed Jesus at first with alacrity, so we doubt not he followed him afterwards with fidelity and fortitude, "rejoicing that he was counted worthy to suffer shame for his name;" and has thus left a pattern for us to imitate, as well as a subject of grateful and affectionate commemoration.

Meanwhile, as an Evangelist his memory ought to be particularly dear to us. In this respect it is his peculiar praise, that to him we are indebted for the first, in order of time, of the narratives of our blessed Saviour's life and ministry; so that he is intitled to the credit, not only of having bequeathed to the Christian Church an invaluable document from his own pen, but of having set an example which has been honourably and usefully followed by the other disciples of our Lord, "whose praise is in the Gospel throughout all the churches."

It is further to be remembered, that his Gospel comes recommended to us by the assurance, (a consideration indeed not peculiar to this Evangelist,) of its being a faithful transcript of Him, whose history it professes to deliver.

Called at an early period to follow our blessed Lord, having thenceforward regularly attended on his ministry, and being thus an eye-witness and an ear-witness of the transactions and the discourses which he relates, he has left us a record, which even in a human view lays claim to implicit credit, independently of the authority which it derives from the circumstance of its being the composition of one, to whom the promise was given of the Holy Spirit, to "guide him into all truth."

In appreciating also the contents of this Gospel, generally accordant as it is in its leading features with those of St. Mark and St. Luke, (for the contents of St. John's Gospel are notoriously in a great degree supplemental to the others,) it is distinguished from the same two in some important and valuable particulars. And the observation ought not to be understood as depreciating the others, for they likewise possess the peculiar merits and their peculiar claims to our esteem, if it be observed, that to St. Matthew we are indebted, as for more circumstantial distinctness and minuteness in the detail of our Saviour's instructions, being "silent as much as possible himself, that Christ may discourse more at large in his Gospel^m,"

^m Dr. Townson.

so also for the specification of several incidents, not related by the other Evangelists, though in themselves of no slight interest or trivial moment. To enumerate all of these were unnecessary for our present purpose: there are however three or four passages in particular, for which St. Matthew may be considered as specially intitled to our highest esteem. Such are our Lord's Sermon on the mount, so fully set forth in his 5th, 6th, and 7th chapters; the particulars of the day of judgment, as delineated in the parable of the ten virgins and in the description of the Son of man sitting upon the throne of his glory, and pronouncing sentence on the assembled nations, in the 25th chapter; and his commission and commandment to his Apostles, in the concluding chapter, to "go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Whether we consider the Christian dispensation as establishing a rule of faith for its professors, or a code of religious and moral instruction; whether as designed to form them into a regularly constituted society under Christ in this world, or as training them by preparatory discipline for immortality and happiness in another; the importance of these passages cannot escape the notice of any in-

quirer, and the value of the document which contains them, and our esteem for the writer of that document, must be proportionally enhanced.

Such are the historical facts, relating to "Matthew the Publican," as he is meekly denominated by himself, or "St. Matthew, the Apostle and Evangelist," as the Church respectfully denominates him; and such are the reflexions which appear most useful to be grounded upon his history. What remains, but that we be admonished to admire and adore the grace of God in calling him from the receipt of custom to be a follower of Christ, and the power and wisdom of God in employing him as an instrument for the conversion of others: that we at the same time venerate and imitate those virtues, which distinguish his subsequent life; his active faith and his prompt obedience; his victory over worldly temptations; his gratitude and benevolence; his ingenuousness and candour; his modesty and humility of heart and language: lastly, that we act after his example in devoting ourselves to the service of our Redeemer, and profit by his labours in diligently studying the Gospel which he has written for our instruction, to the confirmation of our Christian faith and our progress in Christian holiness? And in order to

all this what better can we do, than to conclude these our meditations with the prayer which the Church hath provided for our devotions on this day? "Almighty God, who by thy blessed Son didst call Matthew from the receipt of custom to be an Apostle and Evangelist; Grant us grace to forsake all covetous desires and inordinate love of riches, and to follow the same thy Son Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. *Amen.*"

"ⁿ LORD we beseech thee, grant thy people grace to withstand the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil; and with pure hearts and minds to follow thee, the only God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*"

"^o O LORD, we beseech thee to keep thy Church and household continually in thy true religion; that they who do lean only upon the hope of thy heavenly grace may evermore be defended by thy mighty power; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*"

"^p O ALMIGHTY Lord, and everlasting God, vouchsafe, we beseech thee, to direct, sanctify, and govern, both our hearts and bodies, in the ways of thy laws, and in the works of thy

ⁿ Collect for the 18th Sunday after Trinity. ^o Collect for the 5th Sunday after Epiphany. ^p From the Post Communion.

commandments ; that through thy most mighty protection, both here and ever, we may be preserved in body and soul ; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. *Amen.*”



PREPARE the feast, the viands bring,
Heap high the festal board !
The subject welcomes Israel's King ;
The follower greets his Lord.

But who is he, the host whose care
Provides the costly feast ?
And who are they assembled there
Around the heavenly guest ?

'Tis MATTHEW ; 'tis the publican :
The favour'd host is he,
Who sat, a much despised man,
Beside Tiberias' sea :

And they, the guests assembled round,
They boast no better name ;
One in disgraceful union found,
Allied to sin and shame.

O holy Jesus, and are these
Associates meet for thee ?
Is this the host thy soul to please,
And this the company ?

" Not to the righteous was I sent ;
Not to the whole I cry :
I call the sinner to repent ;
The sick man's health am I.

For them my glory I resign'd :
For them endure the grave :
I came the wandering sheep to find,
The perishing to save."

Shepherd of Israel ! Saviour dear !
Whose voice thy dutious sheep
Safe in thy fold delighted hear,
And to thy pasture keep :

Repentant, lo ! to thee we turn,
To thee for health we pray :
Give us what thou reveal'st to learn,
And what thou bidd'st obey !

ST. MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS.

Michael and his Angels. REV. xii. 7.

SCRIPTURAL NOTICE OF THE HOLY ANGELS.

BESIDES the holy men, whom the Church commemorates in her annual series of services, she has also seen good to appropriate a festival to the celebration of those beings, of a nature superior to that of man, whom it pleases Almighty God to employ in his service, and for the benefit of us his inferior creatures. The festival is intitled "Saint Michael and all Angels," because St. Michael is supposed to be "recorded in Scripture, as an angel of great power and dignity, and as presiding and watching over the Church of God, with a particular vigilance and application, and as triumphing over the devil^a."

^a Dr. Nicholls.

It should however be noticed, that, in the judgment of some learned men, Michael is not the name of one of those angelical beings, who are to come at this time under our contemplation; but rather a name, descriptive of our blessed Lord and Saviour, as leader of the hosts of heaven, and as the champion of his faithful people. According to the like judgment, in various places of the Old Testament where mention is made of "the Angel of the Lord," "the Angel of God," "the Angel of God's presence," the expression is intended, not for one of the holy angels, but for the Son of God himself, appearing as the guide and protector of his people, and anticipating his future manifestation in the form of man for the salvation of his Church.

But to whatever conclusion we may come on this question concerning Michael, it will have little effect on the provision of the Church for this day's solemnity; which she appears to have appointed, less for the purpose of commemorating the individual, than the company of "holy angels" in general, whom she notices under that general description in her Collect for the day. In pursuance then of this supposed purpose of the Church, and in accordance with the plan already observed in these notices, we will first take an historical view of

the "holy angels," so far as Scripture shall enable us; and will then make such reflexions, as may appear calculated to promote our improvement.

In proof of the existence of such a distinct order of beings as the "holy angels," very few words can be requisite. The passages in Scripture, which speak of them, are too numerous and too explicit, to leave a doubt upon the mind of any one, who takes that sacred volume for the rule of his belief. Indeed "it was so general a notion amongst the Jews, and had so clear a foundation in the sacred writings, that it is remarked as a singular opinion of a certain sect, that they held the existence of 'neither angel nor spirit.' The Sadducees, who also denied a resurrection, were the only infidels, as to this point, amongst all those who professed any regard for the books of Moses^b."

Of the origin of these heavenly beings we know little more than the fact, that they were all made by God. The time indeed and the manner of their creation are not plainly expressed in Scripture; although Scripture evidently comprehends them amongst the creatures of God. Thus St. Paul distinctly in-

^b Bp. Conybeare's Sermons.

cludes them amongst the works of God's creation: "By him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him^c." In other passages of holy writ, it is said that "heaven and all things therein" were made by God^d; plainly including the angels, who are often spoken of, as being in heaven: in the book of Job they are termed "the sons of God^e;" and the Psalmist reckons them among "God's works."

The word "Angel," by which these holy beings are most commonly described, signifies in a general sense, what is likewise signified by the words both in the Old and New Testaments from which it is translated, a messenger, ambassador, or representative, who bears a deputed office or commission. But in the appropriate sense, in which we are now supposing it to be used, it signifies a heavenly messenger; an ambassador of a nature superior to man, specially employed in the service and under the immediate direction of God.

They are also described under the names of Cherubim and Seraphim: two Hebrew names,

^c Col. i. 16. ^d Rev. x. 6. Acts iv. 24. ^e Job ii. 1.
xxxviii. 7. Ps. ciii. 20—22, cxlviii. 2, 5.

used in the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and thence derived into our language ; the former denoting probably their unwearied diligence in serving God, the latter their ardent love for him, or perhaps the brilliancy of their appearance. Sometimes they are mentioned as “angels of light,” with allusion to their residence in the realms of light ; and sometimes “the heavenly host,” with the same allusion, and to mark them out as the army of Him, who very frequently designates himself as “the Lord of hosts,” or “the Lord of Sabaoth.”

From the holiness of these heavenly beings, from their near resemblance to God in their nature and properties, and from their readiness in executing the commands of God, as well as from their origin, they are sometimes also spoken of as “the sons of God :” an appellation, which is in like manner given to those pious and holy men, who are distinguished by the same qualities. But this appellation does not in any degree interfere with that peculiar sense, in which the name of “the Son of God” belongs to our Saviour ; who is, even in his human nature, “made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they¹.” Noble and excellent as

¹ Heb. i. 4.

these beings are, they are nevertheless "all," even the highest and most excellent of them, only the attendants on the divine throne, and the ministers that execute God's pleasure. Though called in a subordinate sense "sons of God," God, as the Apostle to the Hebrews argues, never said to one of them, "I will be to him a father," much less, "Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee." They sit not at his right hand: they are not invested with supreme power and authority: but are, in other places of Scripture, represented as covering their faces before him. But our blessed Lord, "the brightness of the Father's glory," and the sharer of his power, receives the homage and adoration of these excellent beings; they are his subjects and ministers: they think themselves honoured by the commands he gives them, and happy in the obedience which they pay him^s.

Of individual angels the names recorded in holy Scripture are but few. Michael is mentioned in the book of Daniel, in the Epistle of St. Jude, and in the Revelation of St. John^b: but that doubts are entertained concerning the person intended by that name, there has been already occasion to intimate. The name sig-

^s Bp. Conybeare.

^b Dan. x. 13. Jude 9. Rev. xii. 7.

nifies "who is as God;" or interrogatively, "who like God?" Gabriel is mentioned in the book of Daniel also, and in St. Luke's Gospel. And in the apocryphal book of Tobit the name of Raphael occurs.

The nature of the holy angels is spiritual. The Psalmist, speaking of the Lord, says, "Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire^k;" and St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, adopts the description^l. But the word, rendered "spirits," might perhaps be better rendered "winds," as required both by the general context, and by the subsequent clause of the verse: for the comparing of the angels to "a flame of fire" in the last clause naturally leads us to apprehend them as compared to "winds" in the first^m. Thus the purity and activity of their nature, and withal the efficacy of their ministry, are aptly described under a comparison to two of the most active and subtle elements, with which we are acquainted. Their spiritual nature appears to be further indicated by our blessed Lord, when he informs us concerning those who shall be admitted to happiness in a future state, that "they neither marry, nor are given in marriage,

^l Dan. viii. 16. Luke i. 19, 26.

^k Psalm civ. 4.

^l Heb. i. 7. ^m Dr. Wells.

but are as the angels of God in heavenⁿ.” Thus the most current opinion of the Christian Church seems most agreeable to Scripture, that angels are pure spirits, without the admixture of any thing material or corporeal^o: at the same time from other representations in Scripture it should seem, that they have been enabled to assume bodily lineaments, and to appear before men in a human shape.

Upon occasion of some such appearances they are described as furnished with wings, to denote the activity and rapidity of their movements^p: and their appearance is represented as most beautiful and splendid, with “countenances like lightning, and raiment white as snow^q.”

Several excellent properties are ascribed to the angels. They are said to “excel” or “be mighty in strength;” and St. Paul terms them the “mighty angels^r.” They are described as endowed with peculiar knowledge and discernment: for to be “as an angel of God to discern good and bad,” and to be wise “according to the wisdom of an angel of God,” are expressions used with reference to them in the Old Testament^s; and in the New, our Saviour intimates

ⁿ Matt. xxii. 30.

^o Mr. Nelson.

^p Isaiah vi. 2.

^q Luke xxviii. 3.

^r Psalm ciii. 20. 2 Thess. i. 7.

^s 2 Sam. xiv. 17, 20.

the extent of their knowledge, and its superiority above that of men; for "of that day," saith he, speaking of the day of judgment, "knoweth no man; no, not the angels which are in heaven^t." They are described as eminent for virtue and holiness; whence they appear to have derived their epithet of "the holy angels^u." And they are withal no less distinguished for their submissive attention to the will of God, and their prompt execution of his orders, "doing his commandments, and hearkening unto the voice of his words^x;" as also for the lively interest which they feel, and for the services which they perform, for the welfare of mankind, being "all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation^y."

The number of the holy angels is infinitely great. "Ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands" is the emphatical phrase by which their multitude is occasionally expressed^z; and the Apostle to the Hebrews describes them as "an innumerable company of angels^a."

Amongst this immense concourse of celestial

^t Mark xiii. 32.

^u Matt. xxv. 31.

^x Psalm ciii. 20.

^y Heb. i. 14.

^z Rev. v. 11. Dan. vii. 10.

^a Heb. xii. 22.

beings different distinctions and degrees of rank prevail. The name, by which they are sometimes collectively denominated, of "the hosts" or "armies" of the Lord, appears to intimate this, as it also intimates their power, their obedience, and their multitude: for without due subordination what is a host or army? And if "Michael the Archangel," as he is expressly styled, be one of the angelical creation, and not the Saviour of the world himself, his title implies superiority in him, inferiority and subjection in others. But the truth appears to be made plain and unequivocal by St. Paul to the Colossians, where he enumerates the invisible parts of the creation; and names those, which are of the greatest eminence among the many degrees of the celestial hierarchy, "whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers^b."

The ordinary residence of the holy angels is in heaven, which St. Jude terms "their own habitation^c." For the throne of God, and his special presence, or the place where he more peculiarly and amply discovers himself, and displays his glory, is in heaven: and there the holy angels attend upon him, and minister unto him,

^b Col. i. 16.

^c Jude 6.

"encircling his throne," as we are informed by the Revelation; and as our Saviour instructs us, "always beholding his face¹."

Of the employments, in which the holy angels are engaged, the information given to us by Scripture is far from scanty.

In heaven their great occupation is the celebration of God's praises, and the offering of their adoration. Thus were they exhibited in vision to the prophet Isaiah: "I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphim: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face; and with twain he covered his feet; and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory^m." And thus to the beloved disciple John: "And all the angels stood round about the throne, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amenⁿ." And again: "And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne,

¹ Rev. v. 11. Matt. xviii. 10.

^m Isaiah vi. 1—3.

ⁿ Rev. vii. 11.

... saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing °."

On earth it is their principal occupation to "do the Lord's pleasure:" as by executing other acts of his directing and controlling providence, so especially by "succouring and defending" God's faithful servants, as the Church expresses the sentiment in the Collect for this day; by "encamping round about them that fear him, and delivering them," and by observing the "charge" which God hath given them over his servants, "to keep them in all their ways," as the Psalmist says^p; or, as it is expressed by the Apostle, by "ministering for them who shall be heirs of salvation."

Various are the particular transactions, in which they are described to have taken part in different ages of the world.

"When the Lord laid the foundations of the earth," the holy angels were present, and poured forth their notes of gladness and gratulation: for then "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy^q."

° Rev. v. 11.

^p Psalm xxxiv. 7, xci. 11, 12.

^q Job xxxviii. 4, 7.

Under the patriarchal dispensation they were the instruments and ministers of God's good providence in behalf of his chosen and faithful servants. They visited Abraham, and imparted to him a knowledge of the divine purposes. They visited Lot, and warned him of his danger in Sodom, and assisted him in effecting his escape. An angel was sent before Abraham's servant to guide him in selecting a wife for Isaac: and the angels of God ascended and descended between earth and heaven, to encourage Jacob during his flight. At the same time they were occasionally the executioners of the Lord's vengeance upon the impious and the wicked, as in the case of the cities of the plain, which the Lord sent them to destroy*.

In the giving of the law, God employed the ministration of angels: as is intimated with less distinctness by the Psalmist, and more plainly expressed by St. Stephen in his speech recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, and by St. Paul in his Epistles to the Galatians and the Hebrews[†]; though the Word of God did undoubtedly preside among them, and it was in

* Gen. xviii. 1, 2, 16. xxii. 11, 15. xix. 2, 12, 16. xxiv. 7. xxviii. 12. † Ps. lxxviii. 17. Acts viii. 53. Gal. iii. 19. Heb. ii. 2.

his name that the proclamation was made by angels, as his heralds and attendants¹.

During the continuance of the legal dispensation, their ministration was also employed for the encouragement and protection of God's people, and for the destruction of their enemies. By them were the armies of Israel directed on their march through the wilderness. By them assurances of unexpected deliverance were given in the land of Canaan, through the means of Gideon and Samson. By them Elijah was comforted and supported under the persecution of Jezebel: and Elisha was preserved from the army of the Syrian king, when, upon his prayer, "the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, the servant of the man of God, and he saw; and behold, the mountain was full of horses and of chariots of fire round about Elisha." It was under the protection of a heavenly messenger, that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, walked in the midst of the burning fiery furnace, and had no hurt: and when Daniel was cast into the den of lions, "God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths, that they did not hurt him." By the same celestial ministry, Judah was preserved and

¹ Dr. Doddridge.

Assyria defeated, when in one night the angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred four score and five thousand men*.

By the ministration of angels also ability was imparted to the Jewish prophets. The lips of Isaiah were touched with a live coal from off the altar by one of the seraphim: it was through the intervention of Gabriel that Daniel received "skill and understanding," and was "made to know the interpretation of the things" which he had seen, and to "understand the vision:" and it was through the intervention, probably of the same angel, that Zechariah was instructed in the meaning of his visions^x.

Under the Gospel, again, numerous instances occur of the ministration of these holy beings. By the same angel Gabriel, who had appeared to Daniel, the annunciation of the conception and birth of the promised Saviour was made to the Virgin mother: as it was by an angel of the Lord that Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, had been apprised of the future birth of his son; and that Joseph was made acquainted in a dream with the supernatural parentage of

* Judges vi. 11. xiii. 3. 1 Kings xix. 5. 2 Kings vi. 17.
Dan. iii. 28. vi. 22. 2 Kings xix. 35. ^x Is. vi. 6, 7.
Dan. ix. 21. vii. 16. viii. 16. Zech. i. 9.

Jesus; and subsequently with the method to be taken for his preservation^y.

The Saviour himself also, "God manifest in the flesh," was, as the Apostle expresses it, at various periods of his earthly manifestation, "seen of angels." His birth was proclaimed to the shepherds of Bethlehem by "an angel of the Lord," accompanied by "a multitude of the heavenly host," who joined in celebrating the praises of God. When our Lord had suffered his long fasting in the wilderness, and had triumphed over the temptations of the devil, "behold, angels came and ministered unto him." During his bitter agony in the garden of Gethsemane, "there appeared an angel unto him from heaven strengthening him." After his death and burial, "the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came, and rolled away the stone from the door of the sepulchre, and sat upon it;" and afterwards announced to the sorrowing disciples the glad tidings of his resurrection. And at his ascension angels attended, and consoled the disciples for his loss with a promise of his future reappearance^z.

Nor did their regard for the Church of Christ and his Gospel, nor did their attendance

^y Luke i. 26, 11. Matt. i. 20. ii. 13, 19. ^z 1 Tim. iii. 16. Luke ii. 9, 13. Matt. iv. 11. Luke xxii. 43. Matt. xxviii. 2, 5. Acts i. 10, 11.

upon his faithful servants upon earth, or upon himself in heaven, now cease. By an angel of the Lord, Peter, when imprisoned, and lying under a sentence of impending execution, was delivered out of the hand of Herod: by an angel of the Lord, Herod himself was smitten for his impiety towards God, and gave up the ghost. Even now, the harmless and virtuous disciple, he whose character is shadowed forth by the humility, meekness, innocence, and simplicity of a child, we have reason to believe is watched over by these holy guardians, though we know not distinctly to what extent or in what manner their guardianship is exercised: we are assured that they rejoice in heaven at the return of the repentant sinner: and at the departure of a pious soul they appear to be employed in carrying it to the abode of rest and bliss^a.

Meanwhile of these "principalities and powers in heavenly places" the knowledge of "the manifold wisdom of God" has been enlarged by the Gospel. Into the mysteries of the Gospel, the redemption of lost mankind by the sacrifice of the Saviour, the Son of God, "the angels desire to look." To Christ, "who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of

^a Acts xii. 11, 23. Matt. xviii. 10. Luke xv. 10. xvi. 22.

God, angels and authorities and powers are made subject." There "the angels of God worship him." They join at present in chanting with a loud voice the praises of "Him who sitteth upon the throne, and of the Lamb that was slain." When the Son of man shall hereafter come in his glory to pronounce sentence upon mankind at the great day of judgment, his coming shall be "with a shout, and with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God:" the holy angels will attend him; and "he shall send them forth," and "they shall sever the wicked from among the just," and "shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." And we are assured, that part of the society, which will thenceforth assist in constituting the everlasting happiness of heaven, and into which "the spirits of just men made perfect" will then be admitted, is "an innumerable company of angels;" whom they will be made to resemble in the qualities of their nature, and in their occupations and enjoyments, for they will be "as the angels of God in heaven^b."

^b Eph. iii. 10. 1 Pet. i. 12. iii. 22. Heb. i. 6. Rev. v. 11. 1 Thess. iv. 16. Matt. xiii. 41, 49. xxiv. 31. Heb. xii. 22. Matt. xxii. 30.

REFLEXIONS.

WE have thus endeavoured to take such a view of the "holy angels," the subject of the Church's commemoration on this day, as the Scripture warrants; not indulging in fanciful and questionable speculations, nor venturing upon any statement, beyond what the Scripture in its plain and obvious sense has been thought to authorize. We now proceed with our reflexions: for which the foregoing Scriptural notice will, after the manner of our biographical notices, as usual supply us with materials.

From the existence of these holy beings we may see cause to adore the infinite goodness and power of the Almighty Creator, in thus forming a link in the chain of intellectual being to connect the inhabitants of earth with himself, through the medium of these his celestial ministers; and in multiplying to an immeasurable extent an order of creatures, capable of loving, serving, and enjoying him perfectly.

The excellence of their nature, whilst it must fill us with admiration of the effects which it is calculated to produce, must raise still higher our admiration of the great creative power from whence it emanates. At the same time, exempt as their nature is from all earthly and material

incumbrances, endowed with wisdom and knowledge, and invested with purity and holiness, it may prompt us to aspire, in this our season of probation and preparation, after those heavenly and spiritual qualities, which will best fit us through the merits of our Redeemer for an entrance into that future state, where he has assured us that those, who are admitted into it, will be "as the angels of God." In order to this most momentous end, let us further contemplate in these holy beings an example, which cannot be too closely followed, of the most ready attention to the will of God, and of the most prompt and cheerful execution of it. It was our Lord's direction to us that we should pray, and it is to be presumed that we accordingly make it the subject of our daily prayers, that "the will of God may be done on earth, as it is in heaven." The angels do his will perfectly in heaven: and if we would that it should be done also perfectly on earth, we should contribute our exertions towards it, by endeavouring to "fulfil his commandments" as they do, and by "hearkening" like them "unto the voice of his words." We do not indeed stand in the immediate presence, or receive our orders at once from the throne: but the Scriptures convey them; and by his gracious Spirit, "God is in the midst of us," continually calling to us, and reminding us,

(But where you are to be) and to glorify all

"This is the way, walk ye in it, when we turn to the right hand, or when we turn to the left."

Among the specifick forms, in which obedience to his will is to be shewn, there is none more conspicuous recorded of the services of the holy angels, than that of worshipping him. Imitating the example set before her by these heavenly ministers, the Church fails not to direct her children in her daily service to unite continually with the Cherubim and Seraphim in the song of Thrice Holy to the Lord God of Sabaoth; and to address themselves to the lauding and magnifying of the same Lord, in her office for the holy communion, "with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven." Nor does she fail to direct them, to "honour the Son even as they honour the Father:" and, as it pleased God, when on the morning of the resurrection he brought again the first-begotten into the world, to say, "Let all the angels of God worship him;" so she instructs her children, together with "the Father of an infinite Majesty," to celebrate "his honourable, true, and only Son," who is together with him and with "the Holy Ghost, the Comforter," one God, blessed for ever. Amen.

Another principal form, in which the angels manifest their obedience, is by ministering to the salvation of men. Let us not render null

their ministry by neglecting our own salvation: let us not shew ourselves indifferent to their example by carelessness about the salvation of others: let us not despise even the least and lowest of our brethren, whom these sons of God do not disdain to attend on and to serve. Rather by active exertions both for ourselves and for our brethren, let us forward the ministrations of these unseen agents: let us do what we can to multiply the joy, which they experience, at the sight of a repentant sinner: let us labour with them to promote both the glory of God in the highest, and at the same time peace on earth and good will amongst men.

But peace will not prevail either in earth or heaven, without due subordination among the inhabitants of each. Such subordination prevails in heaven: and in heaven therefore there is peace. Would to God that such were the spirit, and such the effect, on earth! This was the reflexion of our judicious and admirable Hooker, when a friend observing him just before his death, deep in contemplation, and not inclinable to discourse, took occasion to inquire his present thoughts: to which he replied, "That he was meditating the number and nature of angels, and their blessed obedience and order, without which peace could not be in heaven; and oh! that it might be so on earth!" The anecdote is recorded by Isaac

Walton in his valuable life of that most excellent man and most learned divine: and Bishop Horne in his Sermons, alluding to it, thus beautifully and appositely remarks, "The subject which engaged his dying thoughts ought constantly to engage our living ones; since, in the prayer composed and delivered out to his disciples by our Lord and Saviour, the obedience of the angels is proposed as the pattern to be imitated by us; as the copy after which we should diligently write: 'Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.'"

In such ways as these it behoves us to copy the example of the holy angels. Meanwhile for the services which they render us in ministering to our salvation, and in promoting our security and welfare, a grateful recollection and a solemn commemoration of them may be properly esteemed due. Such regard is shewn them by the provisions of the Church this day; when we acknowledge the benefits derived from them, as proceeding from the ordinance of that "Everlasting God, who hath ordained and constituted the services of angels and men in a wonderful order;" and accordingly pray him "mercifully to grant, that as his holy angels alway do him service in heaven, so by his appointment they may succour and defend us on earth, through Jesus Christ our Lord." Thus

the Church instructs us to acknowledge the services of these heavenly ministers, by referring them to the source from whence they proceed; the will of the common Creator and Governour both of the angels and of us. To do more than this the Church does not instruct us, by prescribing any act of thanksgiving or prayer, addressed immediately to themselves: nor would the Scripture, the guide of the Church in all her ordinances, be our warrant or our justification in doing more. Of worship, in any form or degree, as fit to be addressed to those holy beings, the word of God gives us not any intimation: of the unfitness of such worship on the contrary that word gives us a most distinct and plain intimation, both in the commandment that we worship God only, and in the prohibition delivered by one of the angelical order, "See thou do it not: I am thy fellow-servant^c." And it is the solemn caution of St. Paul to the Colossians, "Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, and not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered

^c Rev. xix. 10.

and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God^d." This caution of the Apostle is a very plain condemnation of angel worship, as an unauthorized infringement of the Christian law, a beguilement of the Christian's reward, and an incroachment on the prerogative of Christ. If it be said, that such worship is addressed to them only as mediators, that makes but little alteration in the case; since to apply to a false mediator is as much a departure from Jesus Christ our only Advocate, as to worship a fictitious deity is the withdrawing of our faith and allegiance from the true God: and the worshipping of angels, which is here condemned, being joined with "voluntary humility," plainly enough signifies such worship of angels, as is performed under colour of humility; that is with this pretence, that it is a kind of presumption in us vile sinners to make our addresses immediately to the supreme God by his eternal Son; that so we apply ourselves to the angels the heavenly ministers, and beg their merits and intercessions to convey our petitions to the great King of heaven^e. Yet is this the very same angel worship, which the Romish Church at this day practises and defends; and she practises and defends it under the same

^d Col. ii. 18, 19.^e Bp. Bull.

colour and pretence : for notwithstanding the explicit and solemn manner, in which the Apostle forewarned Christians against such a corruption of their religion, and such an abandonment of their Lord, “ the worshipping of angels and saints, as mediators, crept into the Church about four hundred years afterwards, and hath continued ever since, in defiance of his admonitions, and against the whole tenour of the sacred writings ^f.”

Renouncing then all such testimonies of gratitude however well-intentioned, and all such rash effusions of misplaced devotion as these, be it the care of the faithful Christian to offer his prayers and thanksgivings for the means of grace and for the hope of glory to Almighty God ; not through these heavenly beings, who, though in a post of duty and service greatly higher than himself, are still but his “ fellow-servants ;” but through that only Saviour, that only Propitiation, Mediator, and Advocate, Jesus Christ the righteous ; who submitted for our sakes to be “ made lower than the angels,” but “ is now set down at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him.” Thus will he be secured against making an impro-

^f Dr. Jortin.

per, and be encouraged to make a proper, use of the provisions of the Church for this day's service : and he may humbly trust, that " God will give his angels charge over him to keep him in all his ways" in this world ; and finally to carry him to a better, where with " an innumerable company" of the heavenly host he may unite in ascribing " Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

Collect for the day.

" O EVERLASTING God, who hast ordained and constituted the services of angels and men in a wonderful order ; mercifully grant, that as thy holy Angels alway do thee service in heaven, so by thy appointment they may succour and defend us on earth, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*"

" IT is very meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks unto thee, O Lord, Holy Father, Almighty, Everlasting God. Therefore with Angels and Archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious name, evermore praising thee and saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of hosts,

heaven and earth are full of thy glory. Glory be to thee, O Lord most high. *Amen*^m."

"GLORY be to God on high, and in earth peace, good will towards men. We praise thee, we bless thee, we worship thee, we glorify thee, we give thanks to thee for thy great glory, O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father Almighty.

"O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Jesu Christ; O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. Thou that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. Thou that takest away the sins of the world, receive our prayer. Thou that sittest at the right hand of God the Father, have mercy upon us.

"For thou only art holy, thou only art the Lord, thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art most high in the glory of God the Father. *Amen*^m."

■ From the Communion Service.

O THOU, who sitt'st on high,
Lord of the earth and sky,
Encircled by thy six-wing'd seraph train^a;
Whom rapt Isaiah view'd,
As round thy throne they stood,
And heard them chanting in alternate strain,
" O holy, holy, holy, Lord of hosts,
Whose glory fills the earth, while heaven thy presence
boasts :"

Lord of the earth and sky,
Whether thou sitt'st on high,
Or wendest forth to manifest thy will ;
Still on thy royal state
Attendant spirits wait,
To swell thy pomp, and thy behests fulfil :
Where'er thou art, thine angel hosts are there,
Bright as the lambent flame, free as the viewless air^o.

All glorious was the array,
When, on Creation's day,
Thou bad'st the earth self-pois'd " on nothing hang^p :"
To see so fair a place
For man's intended race,
Heaven's wide expanse with Hallelujah rang ;
Together sang the stars of morning bright^q,
And all the sons of God shouted for deep delight.

^a Is. vi. 1—3.^o Psalm civ. 4.^p Job xxvi. 7.^q Job xxxviii. 7.

All glorious was the array,
 When thou, on Israel's day,
 Gavest forth from Sinai's top the "fiery law":^{*}
 Ten thousand saints around,
 (While peal'd the trumpet's sound,)
 Resplendent forms, astonished Moses saw:
 No human breath that pealing trumpet blew,
 Which sounded long and loud, and still more loud it grew[†].

And glorious was the array,
 When, on redemption's day,
 Thou camest in lowly guise to visit earth:
 To Bethlehem's nightly fold[‡]
 The news thy angel told,
 And heavenly voices hymn'd the Saviour's birth:
 Glory they sang for God's redeeming grace,
 And peace restor'd to earth, and love for man's lost race.

But yet another day
 Demands that bright array,
 When thou shalt come in glorious majesty:
 Thy holy angels then
 Shall call the tribes of men
 From the four corners of the ambient sky[‡]:
 "To judgment," hark, a shout proclaims abroad!
 Hark, the Archangel's voice sounds from the trump of
 God![‡]

^{*} Deut. xxxiii. 2.[†] Ex. xix. 19.[‡] Luke ii. 9, 13.[†] Matt. xxiv. 31.[‡] 1 Thess. iv. 16.

Blest beyond thought are they,
Whom, on that dreadful day,
EMANUEL, thou shalt welcome for thine own :
Mix'd with a countless band[†]
Of angels they shall stand,
And sing to Him who sitteth on the throne[‡];
“ Worthy is He, the great, the good I AM,
All blessing to receive ; and worthy is the Lamb.”

Lord of the earth and sky,
Whose angel hosts on high
Wait at thy bidding, at thy bidding move :
O grant us to fulfil
On earth thy sovereign will,
As they fulfil it in thy courts above :
That striving now to serve thee, ev'n as they,
Like them we may become through thine eternal day[•] !

[†] Heb. xii. 22. [‡] Rev. v. 12, 13. [•] Matt. xxii. 30.

ST. LUKE.

Luke, the beloved physician. COL. iv. 14.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE OF ST. LUKE.

OF the Saint, whom the Church commemorates this day, Luke the Evangelist, there are not many particulars recorded in the New Testament. No mention is made of him in the Gospels: nor in the Acts of the Apostles, allowed to have been his composition, is there express mention of him individually; although, by the use of the pronoun “we” and “us,” he includes himself amongst the company attendant on St. Paul during a large portion of his travels. By that Apostle he is mentioned three several times expressly: in the Epistle to the Colossians, where it is the most ancient and common, and at the same time the most probable opinion, that “Luke the beloved physi-

cian^a” is the same as Luke the Evangelist; again, in the Epistle to Philemon, whom he joins St. Paul in saluting, being named as one of the Apostle’s “fellow-labourers^b,” and lastly, in the second Epistle to Timothy, where he is again spoken of, as will be hereafter more particularly noticed, under circumstances of honourable distinction^c. He has been also very commonly supposed to be mentioned implicitly by the same Apostle in his second Epistle to the Corinthians, under the description of “the brother, whose praise is in the Gospel throughout all the Churches^d.” Upon the strength however of the general concurrence of the Christian Church he has been always regarded as the Author of the Gospel, which bears his name; a circumstance, probably alluded to in the passage just recited; as also of the Acts of the Apostles which he composed in continuation of his Gospel. It is principally on account of these two works that he is intitled to a grateful commemoration in the Christian Church; whilst the excellence of his character will not fail to be made apparent from other considerations of a personal nature.

St. Luke is reported by Eusebius and Jerome

^a Col. iv. 14

^b Philem. ver. 24.

^c 2 Tim. iv. 11.

^d 2 Cor. viii. 11.

to have been born at Antioch, the metropolis of Syria: a city, celebrated for numerous advantages, especially for its schools of instruction and the ability and learning of its professors in all arts and sciences*. He may have thus enjoyed the opportunity of an ingenuous and liberal education, by which he appears to have profited; and having been first accomplished in the preparatory institutions of philosophy, to have more particularly applied himself to the study of medicine, in the profession and practice of which he probably continued during his life. He has been also said to have been skilled in painting; and pictures of the Virgin Mary have in different places been exhibited as the productions of his art. But this is a mere traditionary story, which deserves to be rejected as altogether fabulous†.

It is doubtful whether St. Luke was a Jewish proselyte, that is one who had been converted from Gentilism to Judaism, before his conversion to Christianity; or a Jew by birth, as well as by religion. Some have supposed him to have been one of the seventy disciples: others have thought that he was one of the two, who met our Lord after his resurrection on the way to Emmaus. The name of one of these is men-

* Dr. Cave.

† Dr. Lardner.

tioned to have been Cleopas; but no mention is made of the name of the other: and he has accordingly been thought to be the Evangelist, who out of modesty declined to mention himself. However this be, and whether or not he was at all a hearer of Christ, there is good reason from the most ancient writers for believing, that he was a disciple, and follower, and fellow-labourer, of the Apostles. As such he is recorded by Irenæus, as well as by later writers: and he is particularly represented by them as alluding to his intercourse with the Apostles in the introduction to his Gospel, where he says, "Even as they delivered them unto us, who from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word⁵." Added to this acquaintance with the other Apostles, which Eusebius terms "more than a slight acquaintance," St. Luke enjoyed a more particular intimacy and friendship with St. Paul. By some writers indeed he has been represented as a convert of that Apostle. But this is not supported by any very strong authority independent of Scripture: "nor are there in the Acts or in St. Paul's Epistles, any hints that St. Luke was his convert. Whereas, if he had been so, there would probably," as Dr. Lardner observes,

⁵ Dr. Lardner.

“have appeared some tokens of it in the affectionate expressions of Paul toward him on the one hand, or in the respectful and grateful expressions of Luke toward Paul on the other hand.”

Of this Apostle however it is indisputable that St. Luke was for a very considerable time the constant and faithful companion. From his own narrative in the 16th chapter of the Acts we learn that he was in St. Paul's company at Troas, before the Apostle took ship to go into Macedonia; that he accompanied him on that voyage to Samothracia; and that he was further his companion on the journey from Samothracia to Neapolis, and thence to Philippi. A change of person at this period of the narrative has given occasion for a question, whether or not St. Luke continued with the Apostle during the transactions recorded in the 17th and two following chapters. By many writers however it is supposed that he did continue in the Apostle's company throughout: by Irenæus in particular, the Evangelist, after his first attendance on St. Paul at Troas, is called the Apostle's inseparable companion^h. Certainly, if at any time separated from him, he was again associated with him during the occurrences which form the

^h Dr. Cave, Dr. Lardner.

subject of the 20th chapter, and the remainder of the book; travelling with him first from Greece through Macedonia to Philippi, and thence again to Troas. And it appears from the sequel of the history in the Acts, that he attended him in all his subsequent dangers, witnessed his several arraignments at Jerusalem, was his fellow-traveller on his tempestuous and perilous voyage to Rome; where he ministered to his necessities, and laboured with him for the propagation and establishment of the Gospel during the whole time of the Apostle's two years' imprisonment there, with which the history of the Acts concludes. His presence with St. Paul at this time appears from the Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon, written during this period; for he is one of those who join with him in sending salutations, and who are mentioned by him as his "fellow-labourers." It is probable that he still continued with him after his liberation: and during the Apostle's second imprisonment at Rome, which was not terminated but by his death, it appears from his second Epistle to Timothy, written most probably at that season, that Luke was still with him.

In the course of his attendance upon the Apostle, St. Luke must have enjoyed frequent and ample opportunities for procuring from him

that information, which he has imparted to the world in his Gospel. "St. Paul himself must have had a distinct knowledge of all things concerning the Lord Jesus. Christianity, as has been often and justly said, is founded in facts. In order to preach it, St. Paul must have had a knowledge of Christ's life, preaching, miracles, death, resurrection, and ascension. As he was not instructed by other Apostles in the doctrine preached by him, he must have had it from revelation. What was thus revealed to him, he preached. And it is easy to understand, how a person, like St. Luke, who was in the constant habit of attending upon him in his ministry during several years, and hearing him preach in divers places and to men of every character, might from St. Paul's sermons have composed a gospel or history of Jesus Christ^s."

This accords with the history of our Evangelist, derived from the best authorities that we possess. Learned men have remarked, that "there is a wonderful agreement of the ancients in making St. Luke the interpreter and attendant of St. Paul, as St. Mark of St. Peter. It is said by Irenæus, that 'Luke wrote the Gospel which Paul preached : ' and by Tertullian, that 'some made Paul the author of his Gospel

^s Dr. Lardner.

because it is reasonable to ascribe to the master the works published by the disciple.' St. Chrysostom, no incompetent judge of the language of the Apostles, discovers in St. Mark's Gospel the concise style of St. Peter, and in St. Luke's the more diffuse diction of St. Paul. In the Synopsis, ascribed to Athanasius, it is affirmed, that 'the Gospel of Luke was dictated by the Apostle Paul, and written and published by the blessed Apostle and Physician Luke^k.' "

Agreeably to this statement of the ancients, that "Luke wrote the Gospel which Paul preached," critics have noticed, that there is often a great affinity in their phrases; of which the account given by them of the institution of the Lord's supper has been frequently brought as an example. But it is to be presumed that the ancients said this of him in a higher sense, than that he followed his master's diction; and meant that he drew his knowledge of evangelical facts, as well as doctrines, from the sources of St. Paul's illumination. This opinion receives countenance from the manner in which he speaks of himself in his preface. In that, whilst he describes himself, as above observed, to have received accounts of our Lord's life and ministry from those "who

* Dr. Townson.

from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word," he also describes himself as "having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first:" which appears to intimate, that, although he had conversed familiarly with other Apostles, and in composing his Gospel did not decline the assistance of those who were "eye-witnesses" of what he related; yet he was principally indebted for this "perfect understanding" to St. Paul, who received his knowledge of the evangelical history and doctrines by immediate revelation from heaven¹.

There is some doubt as to the place where St. Luke composed his Gospel. It seems most reasonable to adhere to Jerome's account, namely, that he composed it in Greece: and in that country also he probably published his History of the Acts of the Apostles, having written it either there or at Rome, at the end of St. Paul's two years' imprisonment in that city, with which he concludes the narrative^m.

Both of these compositions of our Evangelist are inscribed to Theophilus: by which name some writers have supposed no particular person to have been intended, but any good Christian, any lover of God in general, such being

¹ Dr. Townson. ^m Dr. Cave, Dr. Lardner.

the signification of the word. Augustin however, and Chrysostom, and many others, have thereby understood a real person. This interpretation appears more agreeable to the simplicity and dignity of historical and evangelical truth : and the epithet, " most excellent," being the same title which St. Paul uses in his addresses to Felix and Festus, should seem to indicate a man of rank and authority. If St. Luke published his books in Greece, it is probable that Theophilus was a Grecian : and it is a reasonable supposition, that he was a magistrate, whom the Evangelist had converted and baptized ; and to whom he now dedicated his narratives, not only as a testimony of honourable respect, but as means of giving him further certainty and assurance of those things, wherein he had orally instructed him.

The time, the place, and the manner of St. Luke's death are uncertain. Nicephorus, a writer in the 14th century, whom some moderns have followed, relates, that, having successfully preached the Gospel in Greece, he was assaulted by a party of infidels, who hanged him on an olive tree in the 80th year of his ageⁿ. But none of the most ancient writers say any thing of his martyrdom : if called a martyr by any

ⁿ Mr. Nelson.

writer of credit, the term may be most properly understood in a general sense, as equivalent to confessor, or a great sufferer for the Gospel. The most probable case appears to be, that he died at Patræ in Achaia, at an advanced age, and not by a violent death : but, according to the account of a writer in the 8th century, cited by Dr. Lardner, that, "after having endured very many afflictions for the sake of Christ, he returned in peace to him who is the God of peace."

REFLEXIONS.

WE proceed to make some reflexions on the character of St. Luke, whence we shall be led to perceive how worthy our Evangelist is of grateful commemoration in the Christian Church, and what benefit we may derive to ourselves from the commemoration.

Our first ground of commendation shall be the association between our Evangelist and the great Apostle of the Gentiles St. Paul ; whose journeys and voyages he records in the Acts of the Apostles, intimating very plainly, but in a manner void of ostentation, that he was a partner in the adventures, which form the principal subject of his narrative.

Now during those journeys and voyages, whether undertaken generally for the preaching

of the Gospel, or especially for the purpose of appearing before the Roman emperor, for which purpose we know that St. Paul was sent a prisoner to Rome, it is evident that no emolument, or honour, or worldly advantage could have been in the contemplation either of the Apostle himself or of any of his companions: and it is also evident from the narrative, that perils and disasters of various kinds did actually befall them. It is impossible that any one can read the narrative, without being struck with admiration of the disinterested generosity, the love of truth and holiness, the piety, the resignation, the benevolence, the fortitude, the self-denial, the neglect of earthly things; in a word, the various Christian graces of the great Apostle. And it is at least reasonable to suppose, that some measure of these estimable qualities was possessed by his voluntary and affectionate companion.

But this supposition will be confirmed by observing the manner, in which St. Paul himself speaks of this his companion: for it is here to be borne in mind, that the connexion between the Apostle and the historian of his travels was not terminated by their arrival at Rome, but that they continued there together under circumstances highly honourable to the principles and good qualities of St. Luke. In

the Epistle to the Colossians, written during St. Paul's imprisonment, he speaks of our Evangelist under the endearing appellation of "Luke the beloved physician." In his Epistle to Philemon, written also during his imprisonment, he includes him in the enumeration of his "fellow-labourers," those who laboured with him doubtless in the propagation of the Christian faith. And in his second Epistle to Timothy, written at the period of his second imprisonment at Rome, he thus describes his situation: "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica: Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me." Crescens, it should appear, and Titus were absent on the work of the ministry. But from Demas, the worldly-minded Demas, St. Luke is honourably distinguished, as regardless of his own present convenience and interest, and of his future temporal safety, in order that he might continue the alleviator of the Apostle's sufferings in his bonds, and the partner and assistant of his exertions. Commendation like this cannot but give him value in our estimation: for surely it is no light praise to be recorded, as a person "beloved" by St. Paul, whether for his general fidelity to the Church or for his personal attachment to

the Apostle; as a fellow-labourer of St. Paul in doing the work of an Evangelist; as the adherent and support of St. Paul in his state of abandonment and desolation.

There are two considerations which especially recommend St. Luke in this part of his character to our admiration and imitation. The season, in which the exercise of kindness and friendship is most precious, is when it is most wanted: and when is it most wanted, but in the hour of danger, distress, persecution, and desertion? It was one of the greatest aggravations of our blessed Redeemer's sufferings, that, in his severest trial, those from whom he might have expected support and consolation ceased to administer them to him: for "his disciples forsook him and fled." Such was in some degree the condition of his Apostle St. Paul, who adverts to the subject with a painful sense of its bitterness, but with an honourable exception in favour of St. Luke. If we admire the fidelity of the Evangelist, let us be thereby encouraged to follow it. Let not selfish considerations detach us from those, whose virtues merit our regard, and whose necessities require our interposition: but when others have forsaken them, who, like Demas, "love the things of this present world," let us shew our disinterested affection by more

persevering attachment and more exemplary attentions.

But the consideration, which should particularly recommend St. Luke to us as an example in this part of his character, is that his adherence to St. Paul was not merely a personal attachment to the individual, but was a testimony of his regard for the truth of the Gospel, which he himself "most surely believed," and for which the Apostle was "an ambassador in bonds." Together therefore with the affection of the friend we have in our Evangelist an example of the faithfulness of the disciple: of one disposed to sacrifice his personal ease and comfort, to engage in laborious occupations, and to expose himself to an unprincipled persecution "for Jesus' sake." Here again his example may afford us encouragement. We indeed may perhaps not be called upon to make any very difficult sacrifices on account of our religion, or to undergo any extremity of labour, or to incur any signal dangers in that behalf. Yet the faithful Christian will always find occasions in which he may testify his fidelity to Christ, by labouring to instruct the ignorant, and by administering assistance and comfort to his afflicted brethren. And he who engages in these works and labours of love, provided he engage in them with Christian

prudence as well as Christian benevolence, is, like our Evangelist, manifesting thereby a laudable attachment to the Christian faith.

The character of St. Luke however will probably advance in importance under the next view which we are to take of it. It has been noticed that according to the judgment of antiquity St. Paul speaks of him to the Corinthians by implication as "the brother whose praise is in the Gospel throughout all the churches;" and he is supposed to have been so described, as being worthy of praise in all churches for the Gospel which he wrote, according to the application made by the Church of the passage in the Collect for this festival. And worthy indeed he is of everlasting praise and gratitude for the Gospel with which he has furnished us. Possessed himself of the most profitable knowledge, the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, that knowledge which is unto salvation, he desired to apply it to the best of purposes, namely, that of instructing others. "Forasmuch," saith he in the commencement of his Gospel, "as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word; It seemed good to me also, having

had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed." And his Gospel accordingly contains a summary of the facts, to the knowledge of which the first Christians were introduced; an historical exposition of that catechetical information, which was imparted to persons in order to their conversion to the Christian faith.

It is not intended in these reflexions to institute any sort of comparison between the excellence of this and either of the other three Gospels. Conspiring as they all do for the furtherance of the same great purpose, and agreeing as the three first in particular mainly do, in delivering the same body of evangelical truth, they have at the same time their distinguishing peculiarities, which give to each its peculiar value without derogating from that to which the others are intitled. In immediate connexion therefore with our present subject it may be not unimportant to remark, that in the execution of his purpose St. Luke appears to have been distinguished by a measure of learning more abundant than that which was possessed by his brethren in the Gospel history, and by a character of language more various,

copious, and pure; whilst several particulars, which do not occur in the other narratives, are to be found in his, such as some interesting circumstances preceding and accompanying the birth and early years of Christ, the hymns of the blessed Virgin, Zacharias, and Simeon, and some additional miracles and parables. Without enlarging however on this topick, it may suffice to say, that as the character of his history amply justifies the appellation given him by St. Paul of "the brother whose praise is in the Gospel," so it is a solid ground for the prayer with which the Church beseeches Almighty God, as she does on this day, that he, who "called Luke the Physician, whose praise is in the Gospel, to be an Evangelist and Physician of the soul," would be pleased to grant, "that, by the wholesome medicines of the doctrine delivered by him, all the diseases of our souls may be healed, through the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord."

It has been noticed as a peculiarity in the style of St. Luke's writing, that it is of a higher cast than that of the other Evangelists. This superiority in manner may have been the result of his profession, and of the studies and communications connected with it; from which it is probable that he derived more scientific knowledge and more of what is called liberal

information, than we may suppose to have fallen to the lot of his brethren, who were in a rank of life less abounding with intellectual cultivation. And it may have been designed by the special providence of God, that such men as our Evangelist and St. Paul were employed in the composition of writings for the instruction of all ages of the Church, as a satisfactory proof, that not only men recommended by good sense and integrity, but also men possessed of comprehensive and enlightened minds, "most surely believed" the truths of the Christian faith. Persons have perhaps been sometimes found, who, from their attachment to pursuits of science and to the acquisition of general knowledge, have appeared sceptical upon the subject of divine revelation. It may not therefore be inexpedient to be furnished with the remark, that others, at least equally endowed with intellectual powers and equally rich in intellectual acquirements, have been serious, rational, and conscientious believers. Amongst these may be ranked the great Apostle St. Paul, who has been rarely surpassed in strength of understanding, or in the treasures of a cultivated mind: and in connexion with him it may be added, that "Luke the beloved Physician," "whose praise is in the Gospel," was professionally acquainted

with the operations of nature, and the effects of secondary causes, and thus qualified to appreciate the miraculous and supernatural character of the works which he has recorded as foundations of our belief.

But to proceed. It is not only on his Gospel that the claim of our Evangelist to the grateful commemoration of the Christian Church is established. The sequel of that Gospel, as contained in the Acts of the Apostles, is one of the most valuable historical documents, which the Church, or, it may be added, which the world possesses : and inasmuch as it is the only inspired document of that description, relating to the primitive times of Christianity, it may be considered perhaps with reason even more valuable than the Gospel of St. Luke itself. However this may be, the various information, which the work contains, although not a complete history either of the Church at large during the times of which it treats, or of all or of any of the Apostles, is of the most affecting and instructive character. In the matters of fact recorded by it we find continual occasions for improving our views of the Christian dispensation, and of the wisdom and power of God in framing it ; for bettering our practice, or for strengthening our faith. At the same time the circumstances incidentally introduced,

relating to the geography of the countries, which were the scenes of action, to their political state, to the persons who governed them, and to the manners of their inhabitants, extend our sphere of liberal inquiry and useful information : whilst the diversity and importance of the transactions related, the judgment manifested in the selection of circumstances, the simplicity and elegance of the language, and withal the marks of candour, integrity, and veracity, which pervade the narration, cannot fail of raising our opinion of the author, whom the general testimony of Christian antiquity, as well as the internal evidence of the work itself, concur in declaring to be St. Luke. Thus, little known to us in the detail of facts relating to himself, he has been the instrument of conveying to us the history of many particulars, related in the most interesting manner, in the primitive Church : and without doubt it will be readily conceded, that he, whose writings have been such a fruitful source of information, delight, instruction, and improvement to every member of the Church, cannot but deserve to be held by the Church in grateful and perpetual remembrance.

And here, again, let this part of the character of our Evangelist be made an occasion for our improvement. His Gospel, as there hath been

already opportunity to remark, and it may be equally remarked that his history of the Acts of the Apostles, which indeed is a continuation or sequel of "the former treatise," was written for the benefit of Christians, that they might "know the certainty of those things wherein they have been instructed." And if we would be thoroughly grounded in our holy faith, we must be diligent in the study of these, as well as of the other holy Scriptures, which "God hath caused to be written for our learning." With whatever subject men are desirous of being acquainted, they must of necessity study the elements of it, and have recourse to those sources from whence information is to be drawn. Neglect of this so obvious a course of proceeding cannot but leave them in ignorance of the subject. The truth of this maxim is incontrovertible; and it is as applicable to religion as to all the other concerns of life. Neither religious knowledge, nor any other knowledge, comes by intuition; but it is the result of a careful application of the means, which God has provided for our instruction. One of these means, with respect, that is, to religious knowledge, is the study of the Scriptures. Disregard of this salutary provision leaves some men in a state of infidelity, and others, who profess and call themselves Christians, in a state of most deplorable ignorance as to the foundation

and the articles of their professed belief: whereas, would men but give that attention to the subject, which its paramount importance demands, availing themselves withal of those assistances towards understanding the Scriptures, with which the providence of God has furnished them, they could hardly be destitute of a Christian hope, or of the power of "giving an answer to every man that asketh them a reason of the hope that is in them".

Let such be the conduct of any one, who is desirous of knowing "the certainty of those things, wherein Christians have been instructed;" and such in all probability will by God's grace be the result. Let him study the narratives of "the beloved Physician," "the brother, whose praise is in the Gospel," and of the other historians of our Lord's life and ministry. Let him compare the events which they record with the prophecies to which they refer. Let him examine with accuracy the circumstances of all the wonderful works which they relate. Let him dwell on the parables of our blessed Saviour, and on his other lessons of divine wisdom; and withal on the unexampled righteousness and purity of his character and actions, and on the singular circumstances of his

death and resurrection. Let him pass from the Gospels to the other work of our Evangelist: and there observe the fulfilment of our Saviour's promises to his disciples in the descent of the Holy Ghost after his ascension; the preaching, miracles, and sufferings of his Apostles; the propagation and establishment of the Gospel; the martyrdom of St. Stephen; the call of Cornelius; the conversion of St. Paul, and his subsequent labours, and persecutions, and abandonment of every worldly pleasure and emolument for the sake of Christ: and, provided he be indued with common sense and integrity, he will hardly fail of ranking himself amongst the believers in Christianity, delivered unto us, as it is, upon the authority of those, "which from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word," and who have "had perfect understanding of all things from the very first."

We have thus endeavoured to further the design of the Church, in providing for the commemoration of the Saint, whose festival is fixed on this day; "*Luke, the beloved physician*;" the companion, fellow-labourer, and comforter of St. Paul; "*the brother, whose praise is in the Gospel throughout all the churches.*" Upon the whole he has appeared before us as an amiable and estimable man, as a faithful disciple of our Lord Jesus Christ, and as a most

valuable contributor to our treasures of religious knowledge. The use to be made by us of these his good qualities and his exertions in the cause of our holy religion, is to thank God for his example and for his writings; to imitate in our practice the graces which adorn his character, and to make the truths and precepts, which he has delivered to us, the rule of our lives, and the foundation of our faith and of our hopes. And thou, "Almighty God, who calledst Luke the Physician, whose praise is in the Gospel, to be an Evangelist and Physician of souls; may it please thee, that, by the wholesome medicines of the doctrine delivered by him, all the diseases of our souls may be healed; through the merits of thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*"

"O LORD of all power and might, who art the Author and Giver of all good things; Graft in our hearts the love of thy name, increase in us true religion, nourish us with all goodness, and of thy great mercy keep us in the same, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*"

"O GOD, who declarest thy almighty power most chiefly in shewing mercy and pity, mercifully grant unto us such a measure of thy

° Collect for the 7th Sunday after Trinity. ° Collect for the 11th Sunday after Trinity.

grace, that we, running the way of thy commandments, may obtain thy gracious promises, and be made partakers of thy heavenly treasure, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*"

LUKE, tho' 'twas not thy praise to stand
Among the Saviour's chosen band ;
Nor thine perchance the lot to see
That Saviour's flesh-veil'd majesty ;
Nor martyr's palm perchance be thine,
Nor martyr's wreath thy brow intwine ;
Yet many a plea hast thou to prove
Thy title to the Christian's love.

Partner of him, whose valued name
Their own the Gentile churches claim ;
'Twas thine with holy Paul to share
His perils, toils, fatigue, and care ;
With him the wintry deep to try ;
With him the lion's jaws defy ;
At large, th' associate of his way ;
In bonds, his solace and his stay.

Physician lov'd, 'twas thine to ease
The racking anguish of disease,
And with a lenient hand dispense
Refreshment to the wounded sense :
'Tis thine, Physician lov'd, from sin,
That fell disease that dwells within,
To cleanse the sufferer, and impart
Sweet comfort to his fainting heart.

Evangelist, whose record true
The Saviour's life hath given to view,
Whose praise is in the Gospel heard,
That praise be with thy brethren shar'd :
But that by pen inspir'd are told
The fortunes of the infant fold,
Such praise is due to thee alone,
And, LUKE, this honour is thine own.

Physician of the soul, belov'd !
Evangelist, by Paul approv'd !
Or, whom by other name we call,
Companion, helper, friend of Paul !
By thee assured, with clearer eye
Faith reads her title to the sky :
And where does Charity avow
A son more goodly, LUKE, than thou ?



ST. SIMON AND ST. JUDE.

Simon called Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James.

LUKE vi. 15, 16.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE OF ST. SIMON ZELOTES.

THE festival of this day affords a second instance of a double commemoration ; namely, of the two Saints, "Simon called Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James," as they are named by St. Luke both in his Gospel and in the Acts ; or, as they are named by St. Matthew, "Lebbæus whose surname was Thaddæus, and Simon the Canaanite." Their association by the Church in the same festival may possibly have been founded on a tradition, that they travelled and preached the Gospel together in Persia, and were together crowned with martyrdom^a. The

^a Dr. Cave.

tradition itself appears to have no good authority, though it may have been the occasion for their being celebrated together in the Romish breviary; and the association having been once formed, there was no urgent cause for departing from it in the protestant Church; the rather, as of one of the two, namely Simon, the history recorded in the Gospels, as well as in ecclesiastical writers, is extremely scanty. Since he is mentioned first in the Calendar, as well as by St. Luke, we will first proceed with our notice of him.

The parentage of Simon is uncertain. By some writers he is supposed with considerable confidence to be one of the four persons reckoned by St. Matthew and St. Mark among our Lord's brethren. Dean Stanhope says, there is little reason to doubt it; but assigns no reason for the opinion. By others this supposition is with equal confidence denied. Dr. Cave observes, that "no other evidence appears for it, but that there was a Simon, one of the number: too infirm a foundation," he adds, "to build any thing more upon than a mere conjecture." It may be added on the negative side, that whereas Judas is distinctly called "the brother of James," who is designated by St. Paul as "the Lord's brother," and is thus identified with Judas named among the Lord's

brethren by St. Matthew and St. Mark ; whilst Simon the Apostle is not any where styled the brother of James, but is named with another distinctive appellation, as " Simon the Canaanite" or " Simon Zelotes;" it may be judged more reasonable to adopt the opinion of those, who think that he was not one of our Lord's brethren.

In the catalogue of the Apostles he is called sometimes " Simon the Canaanite," and sometimes " Simon Zelotes:" for the purpose, as it should seem, of distinguishing him from Simon Peter. From the resemblance of sound in the former of these appellations, he has been by some persons regarded as a native of Cana in Galilee : by others, as the bridegroom, at whose marriage feast our Lord performed his first miracle. But the name has no reference either to his country, or to his place of nativity or of residence : it has in fact the same signification with the other name " Zelotes;" being derived from a Hebrew word, as the other is from a Greek word, both signifying zeal ; and the name is correctly rendered in English as " the Zealot."

The cause of the name being given him is not ascertained : whether to denote the personal warmth and vigour of his character ; or to intimate that he was a member of the Jewish sect of the Zealots ; a sect distinguished for the

zeal, with which they asserted the honour of their law, and the strictness and purity of their religion, but which had degenerated into licentiousness and extravagance, and rendered them the cause of great miseries to their own nation, as is related at length by Josephus in his history of the Jewish war. "That the name was given to Simon on this account, is hardly to be doubted," says Dr. Cave : and, if so, "his conversion," as Dean Stanhope observes, "is the more remarkable ; for nothing could be more opposite to the meekness and gentleness of Christianity, than the irregularity and fierceness of spirit, by which this sect was actuated."

The only particular concerning him in the Gospels is his call to the Apostleship ; and the only other occasion, on which he is named in the New Testament, is that of the assembling of the Apostles at Jerusalem after our Lord's ascension. Upon the dispersion of the Apostles, Egypt, Cyrene, Africa, Mauritania, and the barbarous parts of Libya, are said to have been the scenes of his ministry ; which is also reported to have been extended to Britain and the Western Islands. But the authorities for such statements are of comparatively recent date, and of no high character. Persia and Britain contend for the distinction of being his place of burial : the former being alleged by the

Roman breviaries and martyrologies; the latter by the Greek menologies, which state him to have gone at last into Britain, where, having enlightened the minds of many by the doctrine of the Gospel, he was crucified by the unbelieving inhabitants, and buried in that country. "He has been sometimes confounded with Simeon, who was successor of St. James the Just in the see of Jerusalem, and was crucified in the 120th year of his age in the persecution under Trajan: but the two persons are sufficiently distinguished in the writings of the Church^a."

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE OF ST. JUDE.

THE other Saint commemorated on this day is described by the several names of Judas, rendered by us Jude, Thaddæus, and Lebbæus; according to a practice before noticed as prevailing among the Jews, of calling the same person by different appellations. Of the two first of these names the signification appears to be much the same, being both derived from the same Hebrew root; and Thaddæus has been judged by learned men to be only a substitute

^a Dr. Cave.

for Judas, used probably in a principal degree for the purpose of distinguishing this Apostle from the traitor of the same name. For his other name Lebbæus different reasons have been assigned: the most probable may be esteemed that suggested by Dr. Lightfoot, who conjectures that the name may have been derived from the place of his nativity, as having been born at Lebba; a town, of which Pliny speaks in the province of Galilee, not far from Mount Carmel, though Dr. Cave questions the correctness of the reading, and supposes the name of the town intended by Pliny to have been Jebba. It was however supposed by Jerome, that both names were given in commendation of the good qualities of wisdom and zeal which distinguished him: "the name of Lebbæus denoting prudence and understanding, and that of Thaddæus signifying a person zealous in praising God ^b."

Judas was "the brother of James;" that is, of James the Less, the son of Alphæus and our Lord's brother; and he is mentioned in St. Matthew's Gospel among the number of Christ's brethren. In his own Epistle he styles himself "the brother of James," as he is also called in St. Luke's Gospel and in the Acts. And the

^b Mr. Nelson.

style is adopted with propriety ; because St. James was not only the elder brother, but was also much distinguished among the Apostles after our Saviour's ascension, and in great repute among the Jewish believers^c, as we have already seen in our notice of that Apostle.

There is no account of St. Jude's call to the Apostleship, nor of any occurrence in which he was particularly concerned, except that upon occasion of our Lord's affectionate discourse with his disciples, as recorded by St. John, a short time before his last sufferings, when he promised that he would manifest himself to them who loved him and kept his commandments, our Apostle interrupted him with the question, "Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world^d?" He evidently laboured under the common prejudice concerning the kingdom of the Messiah ; and he inquired with surprise, how Jesus could speak of manifesting himself to a few only, when he was about to establish an universal monarchy in great power and splendour. The question led to a fuller explanation on our Lord's part of those peculiar favours and influences from his Father and from himself, which the faithful should not fail of en-

^c Dr. Lardner.

^d John xiv. 22.

joying to their infinite comfort, and of which his Apostles in particular should have a satisfactory assurance, when he should come again among them after his resurrection, and bestow among them the gift of “the Comforter, the Holy Ghost.”

Of that gift in common with the other Apostles, in the enumeration of whom after our Lord’s ascension St. Jude is named^c, there is no doubt that this Apostle partook : and that he joined with them in bearing an open testimony in Jerusalem to our Lord’s resurrection; and that he partook with them in the reproaches and other sufferings which they endured on that account; although there are no particulars mentioned of him in the sacred history.

It is reasonable to suppose, that he afterwards for some time preached the Gospel in several parts of the land of Israel : nor is there any reason to make it appear unlikely, although there is no ancient authority for affirming^d, as has been affirmed by more recent writers, that he travelled through Samaria into Idumea; and to the cities of Arabia, and the neighbouring countries ; and afterwards to Syria and Mesopotamia ; and finally as far as Persia^e.

^c Acts i. 13.
Stanhope.

^d Dr. Lardner.

^e Dr. Cave, Dean

The account of his journey to Edessa, whether Jerome says that ecclesiastical history reported him to have been sent to Abgarus, king of Osroëne, is generally agreed to have been by that father inaccurately told of the Apostle St. Jude; and to belong rather to another Thaddæus, one of Christ's seventy disciples, who is said by Eusebius to have been sent thither by Thomas, one of the twelve Apostles, to preach the Gospel in those countries^b.

Of his death there is no account that can be received with confidence. Dr. Cave observes, that "by the almost general consent of the writers of the Latin Church he is said to have travelled into Persia, where, after great success in his apostolical ministry for many years, he was at last for his free and open reproofs of the superstitious rites and usages of the Magi, cruelly put to death." But of these things there remains not any credible history. Indeed, as Dr. Lardner remarks, it may be questioned whether St. Jude was a martyr; and he assigns some reasons, which make it appear probable that he was not.

An anecdote is told by Hegesippus, as quoted in Eusebius's Ecclesiastical History, concerning some of the posterity of St. Jude, which, if it

^b Dr. Lardner.

may be relied on, proves that our Apostle was married and had children, and makes it not improbable that he had been himself by occupation a husbandman. The story is, "that when Domitian made inquiries after the posterity of David, some grandsons of Jude, called the Lord's brother, were brought before him. Being asked concerning their possessions and substance, they assured him, that they had only so many acres of land, out of the improvement of which they both paid him tribute, and maintained themselves with their own hard labour. The truth of what they said was confirmed by the callousness of their hands. Being asked concerning Christ and his kingdom, of what kind it was, and when it would appear, they answered, that it was not worldly and earthly, but heavenly and angelical: that it would be manifested at the end of the world: when coming in great glory he would judge the living and the dead, and render to every man according to his works. The men being mean, and their principles harmless, they were dismissed." From a work, which bears the name of the Apostolical Constitutions, written in the early ages of Christianity, there is ground for supposing that one at least of the Apostles was a husbandman: and Dr. Lardner suggests from the foregoing narrative, that St. Jude may per-

haps be argued to have been engaged in that employment.

St. Jude left behind him one short Epistle, addressed "to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called:" apparently therefore intended for the use of all Christians in general. The design of it seems to be to expose in their true light the principles and practices of some corrupters of the Gospel truth. There is a great agreement in subject and design between this Epistle, and the second of St. Peter; and they were probably written about the same time, namely, about the year 64, 65, or 66. Some expressions in the Epistle itself, for instance in the 17th and 18th verses, appear to imply, that several of the Apostles had left the world, and few of them were still surviving; and from the language in the 3d and 5th verses it may be inferred, that now some considerable time had passed, since the whole scheme of the Christian doctrine had been published to the world, and since the persons, to whom the Apostle was writing, were first instructed in it.

REFLEXIONS.

THE notices of these Apostles, of whom so little is recorded either in holy writ or in eccle-

siastical history, will give occasion to no very extended reflexions. Of Simon indeed, as there is no fact recorded in Scripture except his Apostleship, so there is none which can be confidently relied upon in the subsequent writings of the Church. Why it pleased the providence of God, that so little should be transmitted to succeeding ages of the Acts of this Apostle, and not of this Apostle only, but of many others his brethren in the Apostleship, it may not be easy to determine ; unless we be contented to suppose, that God gave them that support and ability which were requisite for the discharge of their ministry, and gave to their ministry that efficacy which was requisite for causing it to operate upon the minds of men, and then left the history of the Apostles and of their labours to the ordinary course of natural events, the recording of their acts being not needed for the great purpose of extending and maintaining his religion in the world.

It might indeed have been expected, that in the common progress of events, and as a natural consequence of the feelings, which animate the hearts and actuate the conduct of mankind, the acts and sufferings and labours of the Apostles in the conversion of the world would have been studiously recorded by those, who had derived benefit from their teaching,

and been directed by their instrumentality, under the blessing of the divine Spirit, to the knowledge and belief of the Saviour. Such was the case with respect to the Apostles, if we may so term them, of reformed Christianity, whose memories were cherished with zealous attachment by those, on whom they had shed the dayspring of purified religion; and all whose actions from their cradles to their graves were recorded at the period of their suffering with affectionate and grateful fidelity. But the cause of our disappointment with respect to the primitive Apostles of our Lord may perhaps, in some degree at least, be suggested, by their migratory way of life, their uncertain residences, and the short periods during which they were in all probability stationary in any particular place; by their unobtrusive and unostentatious character; by the small space which they, as well as their religion, occupied in the eye of the politician, and by the neglect which they, together with their religion, experienced from men devoted to the philosophical and literary pursuits of the age; by the general absence of "the wisdom of this world" in those, whom God called by them to the profession of the Gospel, even in the most polished nations; by the remoteness from each other, and the little mutual intercourse, of the several countries where they preached; by

the rude and uncultivated state of the inhabitants of several of these countries ; and by the difficulty of recording events even at the time and in the places of their occurrence, and of communicating the records, if made, to other places and times.

Such considerations may possibly account in some measure for the scantiness of the information possessed by us concerning the lives and acts of many of our Lord's Apostles. But whatever the causes may have been, the fact is notorious. From the early history of the Church we learn, that in the course of a few years from the ascension of our Saviour his religion had been preached, and made its way, through the instrumentality of his Apostles, over the most distant regions of the then known world ; from the different extremes of Scythia, and of Mauritania and the southern Ethiopia, to Parthia and India eastward, and to the furthest bounds of the west. But of those who preached and propagated it, we know comparatively little ; as is particularly true with respect to the former, or rather to both, of the Saints of this day.

One valuable practical reflexion may be drawn from this fact ; namely, that as they, who were employed in this the most important service ever intrusted to the hands of men, ap-

pear to have been little anxious about promoting and perpetuating their own honour, so God probably designed us to understand by the example, that it is not the honour of men, which those who come after them, in the preaching or in the profession of his Gospel, ought to propose to themselves for their reward, in the furtherance of his will and in the execution of their duty. If honour from men be given, it is to be acquiesced in, under a sense of gratitude and humility before the Lord of all. Men at least should bestow it, where it is deserved: if things are "lovely" and deserving "of good report," with affection and good report they should be esteemed of. And thus we honour and commemorate, as we deem to be our duty, with suitable solemnity "the glorious company of the Apostles" and "the noble army of martyrs," who have toiled and bled for the faith of Christ. But whether or not they may have been, or now may be, honoured by men, is to them of no consequence: nor will our condition in that particular be eventually of any consequence to us. Suffice it that we endeavour, faithfully and with a good conscience, to do our duty in that state of life, to which it may please God to call us; and whether our names be circulated and live in the mouths of our fellow-creatures, or sink in obscurity and silence, it will matter not

in that day, when "to them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honour and immortality," God will render "glory, honour, and peace:" when "them that honour him, he will honour, and they only that despise him shall be lightly esteemed."

Thus much with regard to the little notoriety, in a worldly view, of these, and of others of the Apostles. Meanwhile the only incident, in which St. Jude is related to have borne a part, may lead to a reflexion on his want of discernment, in confounding his own gross and temporal notions of the character of our Lord with those spiritual notions, which our Lord himself purposed to convey. Our Saviour spoke of "manifesting himself to his disciples;" meaning that he would grant special manifestations of his favour to those who should be specially qualified to receive them. Judas asked, "How is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" The same object being presented to the outward vision of different beholders, it is not in the course of nature that it should be seen by some, and not seen by others. The manifestation therefore of Christ to his disciples, supposing such manifestation to be in a gross temporal sense, must have implied a manifestation of him to others likewise, or generally to the world at large. But the mani-

festation, of which our Lord spoke, was that spiritual manifestation of himself to the inward man, which was to be spiritually discerned: and the distinction teaches us to see, that, however men may resemble each other in temporal qualities, so as to have the like perception of sensible objects, they may be very different from each other in their perception of spiritual objects, since the manifestation of our Lord to his disciples did not imply in it a manifestation of him to the world at large.

The answer of our Lord both admits the distinction, and at the same time explains it. "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." Whence we learn, that, in order to our enjoyment of a manifestation of our Saviour to our hearts, it is in the first place necessary that we love him; according to those numerous declarations by himself and by his inspired messengers, which represent the love of God and of Christ as the foundation of the duty of man. And secondly we learn the necessity of obeying him: "If a man love me, he will keep my words." "He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings." And certainly no one sentiment is more distinctly, more earnestly, more frequently inculcated in Scripture, than the futility of all pre-

tensions to the love of God and our Saviour, which are not evidenced by the keeping of the divine commandments. To those who do love their Redeemer, and who do testify their love by their obedience, we are here further taught by him, that they shall enjoy the love of God in return: that the Father and the Son, by the Spirit, will come unto them, and will make their abode with them, bestowing on them greater accessions of spiritual knowledge, and continual strength and comfort in the Holy Ghost; in a word bestowing upon them that special manifestation of the Son of God, which, whilst it is not communicated to the unbelieving world, or to the professing but inconsistent believer, is the peculiar property and privilege of his faithful and obedient disciples.

One word may be added, with reference to the Epistle left for the benefit of the Church by one of the Saints of this day; the same, to whose dialogue with our Lord we have been just adverting. Particular temporary considerations gave occasion for the Apostle to address that Epistle to the members of the Christian community; and to "exhort them to contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." These peculiar considerations need not occupy our thoughts at present. But the result of them on the mind of the Apostle is

at all times and under all circumstances worthy of being held in remembrance. "The faith which was once delivered unto the saints," or the faith preached by the Apostles to the first Christians, was intended by Him who taught it, to be at all times maintained for the guidance of the future members of the Church : and if at any time that faith be assaulted or slighted, or be in danger of corruption or mutilation, at such time "it is needful" for the successors of St. Jude and of his brethren in the Apostolate "to write" or speak unto their brother Christians, and "exhort them that they should earnestly contend for that faith;" and "it is needful" for all those, who deem reverently of the Christian verity, "earnestly to contend for it."

What are the several particulars of the faith, for which it is needful that we so contend, it may be unnecessary here to say more, than that they are contained in the volume of the holy Scriptures ; and compendiously in the three Creeds, which are founded upon the certain warranty of holy Scripture, derived from the early ages of Christianity, and adopted into the services of our Apostolical and Scriptural Church. At the same time it may be useful to remark, both upon its own account, and also with a view to the dialogue which passed between our Saviour and St. Jude, which has been

the subject of our previous reflexions, and the matter of which we cannot possibly suppose to have been indifferent to our Apostle, that a very important portion of the Christian faith is comprised in the duty of those, who profess themselves believers in the Gospel, to love and obey their Redeemer; in the encouragement which they are then intitled to expect from the Father and the Son, who will come unto them, and make their abode with them; and in the communication of all spiritual blessings through the agency of "the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in his Son's name." In a word, not only the existence of the three holy Persons in the divine nature, but their co-operation also in the work of grace for the present edification and comfort, and the future salvation, of the Church of Christ, is an essential article in the Christian religion: and it is one, for the maintenance of which no Christian can feel indifference, if he values the exhortation of the Apostle, one of the Saints of this day, to "contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."

Collects.

"O ALMIGHTY God, who hast built thy Church upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the

head corner-stone; Grant us so to be joined together in unity of spirit by their doctrine, that we may be made an holy temple acceptable unto thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen*^a."

"O GOD, whose blessed Son was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil, and make us the sons of God and heirs of eternal life; Grant us, we beseech thee, that, having this hope, we may purify ourselves even as he is pure; that when he shall appear again with power and great glory, we may be made like unto him in his eternal and glorious kingdom; where with thee, O Father, and thee, O Holy Ghost, he liveth and reigneth, ever one God, world without end. *Amen*^b."

"ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who hast given unto us thy servants grace by the confession of a true faith to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of the divine Majesty to worship the Unity; We beseech thee that thou wouldest keep us stedfast in this faith, and evermore defend us from all adversities, who livest and reignest, one God, world without end. *Amen*^c."

^a Collect for the day.

^b For the 6th Sunday after

Epiphany.

^c For Trinity Sunday.

SAVIOUR, who, exalted high
In thy Father's majesty,
Yet vouchsafest thyself to shew
To thy faithful flock below ;
Foretaste of that blissful sight,
When array'd in glorious light,
Beaming with paternal grace,
They shall see thee face to face :
Saviour, tho' this earthy shroud
Now my mortal vision cloud,
Still thy presence let me see,
Manifest thyself to me !

Son of God, to thee I cry !
By the holy mystery
Of thy dwelling here on earth ;
By thy pure and holy birth,
Offspring of the Virgin's womb ;
By the light, thro' midnight gloom
Bursting on the shepherds' gaze ;
By the Angels' song of praise ;
By the leading of the star,
The eastern sages' guide from far ;
By their gifts, with worship meet
Offer'd at thy infant feet :
Lord, thy presence let me see,
Manifest thyself to me !

Son of man, to thee I cry !
By thy holy infancy ;
By the rite, when first began
Thy keeping of the law for man ;

By thy early duty vow'd,
A firstborn, in the house of God ;
By the wisdom past thine age,
Questions deep, and answers sage,
While the listening elders heard
Rapture-struck each wondrous word :
Lord, thy presence let me see,
Manifest thyself to me !

Jesus, Saviour, hear me cry !
By thy lowly piety ;
By the hallowed water shed
Duly on thy righteous head ;
By thy fasting, lone and long,
Borne the savage beasts among,
In the desert's solitude ;
By the tempter's wiles subdued ;
By thy triple conquest won ;
Proofs of God's beloved Son :
Lord, thy presence let me see,
Manifest thyself to me.

Christ, Anointed, hear me cry !
By thy awful ministry ;
By thy works with mercy fraught,
Wisely plann'd, and greatly wrought ;
By thy lessons, just and sure,
Doctrines true, and precepts pure ;
By the lore thy actions teach,
Sinless life, and guileless speech ;
By the signs, with grace endued,
The cleansing font, the heavenly food :
Lord, thy presence let me see,
Manifest thyself to me !

Lamb of God, to thee I cry !
By thy bitter agony ;
By the blood thy flesh distill'd ;
By thy soul with anguish thrill'd ;
By thy visage, marr'd and soil'd ;
By thy form, of beauty spoil'd,
In the robe of scorn array'd,
Taunted, mock'd, revil'd, betray'd,
Smitten, bound, with scourges torn,
Grinding nails, and platted thorn ;
By thy lip all parch'd and dry ;
By thy loud desponding cry ;
By thy spirit's parting groan ;
By thy pangs to us unknown,
Felt by thee, and thee alone :
Lord, thy presence let me see,
Manifest thyself to me !

Man of sorrows, hear me cry !
By thy great humility ;
By thy meekly-bowed head ;
By thy gentle spirit fled
To the mansions of the dead ;
By the wound, whence issuing flow'd
Water mingled with thy blood ;
By thy breathless body laid
In the rock's sepulchral shade,
Where man ne'er before repos'd,
Straitly watch'd, securely clos'd :
Lord, thy presence let me see,
Manifest thyself to me !

Prince of life, to thee I cry !
By thy glorious majesty ;

By the earthquake's powerful shock ;
By the opening of the rock ;
By thy triumph o'er the grave,
Meek to suffer, strong to save ;
By the serpent's bruised head ;
By thy captors captive led ;
By thy re-ascent to heaven ;
By thy Holy Spirit given,
When on thy Apostles came
Rushing wind, and tongues of flame :
Lord, thy presence let me see,
Manifest thyself to me !

Lord of glory, God most high,
Man exalted to the sky,
God and man, to thee I cry !
With thy love my bosom fill ;
Prompt me to perform thy will ;
Grant me, what thou bidd'st, to do ;
What thou proffer'st, to pursue :
So may He, the Sire above,
Guard me with a parent's love !
So may He, the Spirit blest,
Whisper comfort, hope, and rest !
So mayst Thou, my Saviour, come,
Make this froward heart thy home,
And manifest thyself to me
In the triune Deity !

ALL SAINTS.

The spirits of just men made perfect. HEB. xii. 23.

HISTORICAL NOTICE OF ALL SAINTS' DAY.

THE Church, having in the course of her annual services commemorated those individuals whom she esteems worthy of singular honour, and having now arrived nearly at the end of the ecclesiastical year, brings her series of commemorative festivals to a close, by devoting one to the memory of "All Saints."

The Saints, intended to be commemorated on this occasion, are those holy persons, who having been sanctified by their admission into the Christian Church, and having under the influence of the Spirit of holiness endeavoured to serve God on earth in a manner corresponding to their holy vocation, are removed hence in order to their admission into a state of superior holiness and happiness.

For the term "Saints" is commonly used in the New Testament, particularly in St. Paul's Epistles, to denote Christians in general, because they are set apart and separated from the world for sacred purposes, and consecrated to the service of God, and so lie under a necessary obligation to be true and real saints: so that in this comprehensive sense it is as large as the word "Christians;" and stands opposed not to the unsound members of the Church of Christ, but to the world in general. In a more limited sense however it signifies those persons, who are "holy," not by profession only, but in practice: who are Christians, not only in name but in deed. And in a sense still more limited it is confined to those, who having fulfilled their part in the Church militant here on earth, are gone, in the character of "the spirits of just men made perfect," to increase the number of the Church triumphant in heaven. It is for the commemoration of these holy persons, that the festival of this day is intended.

That we may have a clearer view however of the intention of the Church in this provision, as well as of her admirable moderation and judgment in making it, we will take an historical survey of the circumstances which led to this appointment, thus supplying the place of our biographical notices on former oc-

casions; and will then have recourse to such reflexions, as may seem calculated to promote the purposes of the Church.

The solemn recollection and commemoration of those deceased friends, whom we have highly esteemed in life, and who have been endeared to us after death by a sense of their excellence and their virtues, is agreeable to the common feelings of mankind: and this natural disposition would probably have prompted the early Christians to cherish with peculiar respect and affection the memory of those, who had been distinguished by "running with" exemplary "patience the race that was set before them^a." But it has been supposed that they acted besides under the influence of that exhortation of the Apostle to the Hebrews, wherein he admonishes them, to "remember them which had the rule over them, who had spoken unto them the word of God: whose faith," saith the Apostle, "follow, considering the end of their conversation: Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever^b:" as if he had called on Christians, to pay a due and particular respect to the memory of such as had been their spiritual guides, from a consideration of the constancy and perseverance, with which

^a Heb. xii. 2.

^b Heb. xiii. 7.

they had continued in the faith and sealed it with their blood, in full hope of that crown of glory which Christ hath promised to them that are faithful to the death. And it has been further supposed, that the author of the Epistle may have alluded to the martyrdom of St. James, the son of Alphæus, the first bishop of Jerusalem, who had not long before laid down his life for the testimony of Jesus^c.

But whatever may have led to the practice of periodically commemorating distinguished Saints in the Christian Church, the practice itself is of high antiquity, and is recorded with various circumstances. Two of the most ancient monuments of ecclesiastical history, which we possess, except the New Testament, are the accounts of the martyrdom of Ignatius and Polycarp, both disciples of St. John, written at the time of their suffering by the Churches of Antioch and Smyrna, of which they were respectively bishops. In the account of the martyrdom of Ignatius we find, that those who had been eye-witnesses of his sufferings, which are supposed by learned men to have happened about the year 110, published the day of his martyrdom for this reason, that the Church of

^c Mr. Wheatly, Mr. Nelson, Abp. Secker. Some of the following remarks are taken from the same authors, but it has not been thought necessary to particularize them.

Antioch might meet together at that time, to celebrate the memory of so valiant a champion and so faithful a martyr of Christ. After this we read of the Church of Smyrna giving an account of Polycarp's martyrdom, which occurred about the year 168, and of the place where they had entombed his bones; and withal professing, that they would periodically assemble in that place, and celebrate the birth-day of his martyrdom with joy and gladness; both in memory of the Saint who had suffered, and for the encouragement and preparation of those who might be called to suffer after his example.

The other primitive Churches appear to have followed the same rule, as those of Antioch and Smyrna; and each seems to have honoured the more eminent of its own martyrs, who had been usually its teachers also, by anniversary assemblies for preserving the reverence due to their characters, and for offering up thanks to God for their examples. Tertullian, who has been remarked for his carefulness in recounting the practices of the primitive Church, affirms, that Christians were wont to celebrate yearly the days of the martyrs' birth, that is, of their sufferings, as a custom handed down in succession from their ancestors. In Constantine's time these days were commanded to be observed with great care and strictness; and it was

judged an instance of profaneness to be absent from the meetings of the Christians on such solemnities.

The object of the festivals, and the manner in which they were observed, were at first equally innocent and unexceptionable, useful and praiseworthy. Professing, as in the case of the Church of Smyrna, that, whilst they "worshipped Christ as the Son of God," they "worthily loved the martyrs, as the disciples and followers of the Lord, and because of their invincible affection to their King and their Master;" they upon this account judged it reasonable to cherish their memories with all possible respect and honour; partly that others might be encouraged to practise the same patience and fortitude, and partly that virtue, even in this world, might not lose its reward.

Accordingly, in observation of these festivals, they made it their custom to assemble annually at the graves of the martyrs: there to make a solemn recital of their sufferings and their triumphs, to commend their virtues, and to bless God for their pious examples, for their holy lives, and for their happy deaths. At the same time they celebrated these days with signal expressions of love and charity to the poor, and with mutual rejoicings and congratulations, which were distinguished by their sobriety and

temperance, and adapted to the modesty and simplicity of Christians.

But by degrees these institutions were much abused, both as to the number of the festivals, and as to the manner of their celebration. Succeeding ages were as eager, as those which had gone before, to appoint and observe festivals in honour of their own contemporaries. Persons, some perhaps of considerable merit, but who had not been distinguished by a pre-eminent degree of suffering or sanctity; and others, whose pretensions to such distinction were of a very questionable character; were from undue partiality, or with culpable incaution, admitted into the Liturgy of one Church, and thence without sufficient inquiry adopted into that of another. Thus the Calendar became crowded with the names of saints, which from the very frequency of their occurrence caused great inconvenience by the multiplication of holydays; and many of which were but little calculated to produce edification in the minds of those who were engaged in their celebration.

Meanwhile the manner of celebration had deviated from its original simplicity and harmlessness into practices inconsistent with the purity of the Christian faith. The primitive Christians, as we have seen, commemorated the deaths of the first martyrs every year on the

anniversary of the day on which they had suffered: and upon those occasions they pronounced orations, reciting the excellencies and the sufferings of the saint, who was the subject of the commemoration. Of such orations the earliest now extant are those of Gregory of Nazianzum, who lived towards the end of the fourth century of the Christian era^d: a man of great piety and learning, but of a rhetorical and poetical genius; and much devoted to the study of the celebrated rhetorician Isocrates, from whom he has been supposed to have borrowed much of his turn of thought and forms of expression^e. In the encomiastical orations, pronounced upon these occasions, which were composed with all the freedom and latitude of declamatory eloquence, there was frequently a sort of rhetorical address to the dead person, who was contemplated as enjoying happiness in heaven; and a kind of petition to intercede with God in favour of those, who were paying that honour to his memory. This was at first ventured upon with doubtfulness and hesitation, and always with some such qualification as this, "If there be any sense or knowledge of what we do below." But these qualifications were gradually omitted: superstition assumed a more

^d Bp. Tomline.^e Dr. Cave.

decided form : and the orators addressed the dead with direct invocations and formal prayers, and solicited their assistance without any scruple or reserve. In the fifth century they prayed to God to listen to the intercessions of his saints and martyrs : at no distant period litanies were appropriated to them : and at length, by an easy transition, prayers were offered to them in the same manner as to God and Christ. Thus the invocation of saints was grafted upon the primitive and simple commemoration of them, and became an established practice of the Christian Church : it was continued through the dark ages, which succeeded : and at length the Council of Trent in the 16th century decreed, that "all men are to be condemned who do not own, that the saints, reigning with Christ, offer their prayers to God for men ; and that it is useful to invoke them, to procure their assistance in asking God for blessings through Christ."

At the Reformation these abuses were perceived and corrected. The word of God appeared to give no authority for invoking the departed, or for believing that they are man's intercessors at the throne of grace. On the contrary such belief and practice appeared to be at variance with the fundamental principles of Christian devotion, as laid down in the

Apostle's positions; that "there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;" and that "through him we have access to the Father^f." And so the Church pronounced in her 22d Article, that the "invocation of saints," together with other particulars of "the Romish doctrine" therein specified, "is a fond thing vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the word of God." And accordingly from the services, wherewith she continued the commemoration of saints, she excluded all invocation of them; every address immediately to themselves; every recognition of them as mediators between God and men; in short, every notice of them, direct or indirect, which adverted to them in such a manner, as if through their merits or intercession the divine favour was vouchsafed to man.

At the same time the abuse with respect to the number of Saints' days was likewise corrected. All festivals, which could justly be deemed supernumerary and impertinent, were abrogated: the Calendar passed over in silence, as subjects of religious commemoration, the names of all those saints, for whom an unquestionable and peculiar claim to that distinction

^f 1 Tim. ii. 5. Eph. ii. 18.

could not be advanced : and in addition to those holy days, which were appointed in honour of the chief events in our Saviour's life and ministry, no others were retained, but such as celebrated the principal Saints mentioned in the New Testament. Such were John the Baptist, the messenger and forerunner of our Saviour : and the blessed Virgin, his mother, though the festivals indeed, which bear her name, may rather be ranked with those which were appointed in honour of our Saviour himself : such again were the eleven Apostles, who originally received commission from our Lord to preach the Gospel to the world ; and St. Matthias who was elected into the number, to fill up the vacancy caused by the transgression of the traitor ; and the two supernumerary Apostles St. Paul, and St. Barnabas, who afterwards received an extraordinary and special call : such again were the Evangelists, who had been the instruments of bestowing upon the Church the invaluable gifts of written accounts of our Lord's life and ministry ; and the Martyrs who first bore testimony to the truth of his holy religion, and glorified God by their deaths : such finally were the holy Angels, whom it pleases the Almighty to employ, not only in his service in heaven, but also as ministers of good to his servants upon earth. To the festivals comme-

morative of these different persons, mentioned in the New Testament, one other was added, as a substitute for that needless and burdensome profusion of days, commemorative of various saints, which the Church saw good to abrogate. Thus she appointed the festival of All Saints, as an occasion for celebrating under one general denomination all those holy persons, who had lived and died in a manner worthy of the vocation wherewith they were called: for expressing her grateful acknowledgments, as in the Collect for the day, to "Almighty God, who hath knit together his elect in one communion and fellowship, in the mystical body of his Son Christ our Lord;" and for putting up her prayers to him, that he will "grant us grace so to follow his blessed saints in all virtuous and godly living, that we may come to those unspeakable joys, which he hath prepared for them that unfeignedly love him, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

It only remains to be added to this historical notice, that the festival of All Saints was not first instituted by the Church at the Reformation, though it had not been of very great antiquity. About the year of our Lord 610, the heathen pantheon or temple, dedicated to all the gods, was, at the desire of Boniface the Fourth, bishop of Rome, taken from the hea-

then by the emperor Phocas, and dedicated to the honour of All Martyrs: hence came the original of All Saints, which was then celebrated on the first of May. Afterwards by an order of Gregory the Fourth, in the year 834, it was removed to the first of November, where it has remained ever since^b. A better situation could not be found for it than this, towards the close of the ecclesiastical year, and after the festivals of all the individual Saints. In retaining the festival however, as well as the day on which it is observed, the Church has kept clear of any corrupt admixture of Romish superstition. The Collect for the day, as well as the Collects for most of the other Saints' days, is one of those which were composed anew at the Reformation; and substituted in the place of others, which, containing either false or superstitious doctrines, were on this account rejected^c.

REFLEXIONS.

IN proceeding to our reflexions upon this festival, let us not withhold the due tribute of admiration and gratitude from our national Church, who conducted herself on the occasion, to which we have been adverting, with

^b Dr. Nicholls. ^c Dean Comber, Mr. Shepherd.

such eminent moderation and discretion : with so pure a regard to the principles of holy Scripture, and with such becoming respect for the institutions of her early predecessors in the Christian faith. What had grown into abuse in the observance of these institutions, she carefully corrected : what she judged to be really valuable and useful, she scrupled not to retain. For these commemorative festivals if she found no positive injunction in holy writ, she certainly found nothing to prohibit or discourage them : at the same time she certainly found an example for them in the practices of very early Christians, almost ascending up to the age of the Apostles themselves. These examples, venerable for their antiquity, agreeable to the best feelings of human nature, and calculated in her judgment to promote the influence of our holy religion on the hearts and lives of its professors, she accordingly followed : keeping her commemorations within the bounds of a reasonable and praiseworthy observance with respect both to frequency and to manner ; reducing to a small number that perpetual recurrence of holy days, which had become burdensome and prejudicial both to individuals and to the community, and which had lost even in the very frequency of their recurrence the benefits which might rationally be expected from intermitted

commemorations ; and banishing from the form of her commemorations every thing which could be regarded as a deviation from the rule of Christian duty, and which was not warranted by the strictest interpretation of the word of God. Without digressing into unnecessary reflexions, either upon that Church, which had authorized the abuses now under consideration, or upon those Churches, which, in their zeal for reformation, abolished not the abuse only but the use : we may be allowed to indulge a feeling of affectionate veneration for the scriptural and apostolical Church, established by God's good providence in this kingdom, and now constituting the united Church of England and Ireland ; for the wise discrimination with which she perceived the mean between the two extremes, and for the moderation and firmness with which she adopted it.

In pursuance of this sentiment it behoves us, as dutiful children of the Church, to apply these commemorative services in the way wherein she directs us : by considering the virtues exhibited in the lives of the holy persons commemorated ; and making them, not the objects of our invocation, nor the channels of approach to the divine presence, but patterns for our imitation, so far as they themselves were modelled

after the pattern of the great Exemplar of sanctity, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The views of the Church in this particular may be illustrated by an interesting provision in one of her prayers for the order of the Holy Communion; namely, that "for the whole state of Christ's Church militant here in earth." In this excellent and comprehensive form, having directed us to offer our prayers and supplications for the several classes and members of "the universal Church," in their actual state of warfare under the Lord's banner, she in the end makes mention of "all his servants departed this life in his faith and fear," for whom she directs us to "bless his holy name, beseeching him to give us grace so to follow their good examples, that with them we may be partakers of his heavenly kingdom:" and finally she directs us to conclude with the petition, "Grant this, O Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our only Mediator and Advocate."

Now this combination of sentiment is worthy of being remarked. In praying for grace to "follow the good examples" of the departed saints, she plainly shews the use to be made of a recollection of their virtues: in praying that grace may be granted "for Jesus Christ's sake, our only Mediator and Advocate," she plainly

shews, that it is not for the merits, or through the mediation and intercession, of the saints, that she expects God's grace. And this is the more worthy of being remarked, because into this very petition the Romish Church, for the celebration of her mass, has introduced the names of the blessed Virgin and other saints, through whose merits and prayers they implore the divine grace, even in this very act of a special and lively commemoration of the death of Christ, our only Mediator: as if to plead in virtue of our Lord's passion were not sufficient; and as if that very intercession, by which the holy Virgin herself and all the other saints were made acceptable to God, were not alone powerful enough to make us acceptable in his sight^k. But the Church neither desires nor needs, and we the members of the Church ought not either to desire or need, any other mediator or advocate, but our Lord Jesus Christ. This important admonition we derive from the instance before us, as well as from the ordinary provisions in other parts of the service of the Church. At the same time we are admonished by her of our duty, to "follow the good examples" of all God's servants "departed this life in his faith and fear;" or to

^k Dean Comber.

“follow his blessed saints in all virtuous and godly living,” as the sentiment is expressed in the Collect for this festival.

“Their examples indeed,” as Dean Stanhope well observes, “are left us, and our memories are refreshed with them for this very purpose, that we also should ‘run with patience the race that is set before us.’ Their courage and constancy, their resignation and charity, should be copied by us, as occasion requires. Their sincerity and devotion, the purity of their faith, the innocency of their conversation, their fruitfulness in good works, their contempt of the world and heavenly-mindedness, should be patterns always before our eyes; because these are virtues, that may and should be always in our practice. In a word, we ought to express our thanks to Almighty God for the advantage of such shining examples, and pay all due reverence to their memory, by endeavouring to be like them. For, when all is done, the best and most acceptable honour we can possibly do those renowned Christian heroes is the forming of our conduct upon the model of their graces, and aspiring after the weight and the brightness of their crowns.”

Our minds may be further directed to another subject of reflexion, which is also intimated by the Church in the Collect for the

day, which speaks of Almighty God, as having "knit together his elect in one communion and fellowship, in the mystical body of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord."

The religion of Christ is a religion of communion and fellowship. It brings us into communion with the Father, from whom cometh down every good and perfect gift; with his Son, Jesus Christ, through whom forgiveness and mercy are conveyed to us; and with the Holy Ghost, whose sanctifying graces are conferred on such, as duly qualify their hearts for the reception of them¹. It brings us into communion also with the holy angels; for they are "ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them, who shall be heirs of salvation." Further it brings us into communion with all those, "who have obtained the like precious faith with ourselves," as being, in a peculiar sense, children of the same Father, disciples of the same Master, animated by the same Spirit, members of the same body; with whom we ought to maintain communion by all proper ways, especially by communicating together in the different offices of religion, and in acts of mutual benevolence and love.

But this communion or fellowship into which

¹ John i. 3. 1 Cor. i. 9. Phil. ii. 1. Rom. viii. 9.

our religion brings us with our brethren, is not limited to those on earth. It extends also to such as have "departed this life in the true faith and fear of God;" together with whom we assist in constituting the one universal Church of Christ, being parts of his one "whole family in heaven and earth^m." In what ways they exercise that communion towards us at present, is not distinctly revealed: but it is highly probable that they do so, by loving us, by praying for us, and by rejoicing at our welfare. And we may exercise it towards them, not by addressing to them petitions, which we are neither authorized to offer, nor have any grounds to think that they can hear; not by offering petitions for them, since we have reason to be persuaded that their spiritual warfare is already accomplished, and that they neither need nor can be benefited by our prayers: but by thanking God for the grace, which he bestowed upon them, and for the good examples which they have left us; by rejoicing at their deliverance from the burden of the flesh, and their admittance into joy and felicity; by holding their memories in honour; by imitating their virtues; and by beseeching God to "give us grace, so to follow their good

^m Eph. iii. 15.

examples," that, having conducted ourselves like them with holiness here, we may meet them in happiness hereafter, and "with them may be partakers of his heavenly kingdom." It is only in that kingdom, that the communion of the Saints in heaven and earth will be made perfect: There they, who are now serving God faithfully here, will become in the fullest sense "fellow-citizens with the Saints, and of the household of God:" there the Church militant and the Church triumphant will be united in the one "general assembly and Church of the first-born, which are written in heaven:" and all the Saints of God, all "the spirits of just men made perfect," all those, of whatever "nation, and kindred, and people, and tongue," who have departed in the true faith of his holy name, will be gathered together from the four winds; and together "have their perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, in his eternal and everlasting glory; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. *Amen*."

"He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly; Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with us all. *Amen*."

ⁿ Eph. ii. 19.

^o Heb. xii. 23.

^p Rev. xii. 20, 21.

“O ALMIGHTY God, who hast knit together thine elect in one communion and fellowship, in the mystical body of thy Son Christ our Lord; Grant us grace so to follow thy blessed Saints in all virtuous and godly living, that we may come to those unspeakable joys, which thou hast prepared for them that unfeignedly love thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen*.”

“THE Almighty Lord, who is a most strong tower to all them that put their trust in him, to whom all things in heaven, in earth, and under the earth, do bow and obey, be now and evermore our defence; and make us know and feel, that there is none other name under heaven given to man, in whom, and through whom, we may receive health and salvation, but only the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. *Amen*.”

“UNTO God’s gracious mercy and protection we commit ourselves. The Lord bless us, and keep us. The Lord make his face to shine upon us, and be gracious unto us. The Lord lift up his countenance upon us, and give us peace, both now and evermore. *Amen*.”

• Collect for the day.
the Sick.

• From the Visitation of
the Sick.

THERE is a dwelling-place above;
Thither to meet the God of love
The poor in spirit go.
There is a paradise of rest;
For contrite hearts and souls distressed
Its streams of comfort flow.

There is a goodly heritage,
Where earthly passions cease to rage;
The meek that haven gain.
There is a board, where they who pine
Hungry, athirst, for grace divine,
May feast, nor crave again.

There is a voice to mercy true;
To them, who mercy's path pursue,
That voice shall bliss impart.
There is a sight from man conceal'd;
That sight, the face of God reveal'd,
Shall bless the pure in heart.

There is a name, in heav'n bestow'd;
That name, which hails them sons of God,
The friends of peace shall know.
There is a kingdom in the sky.
Where they shall reign with God on high,
Who serve him best below.

564 *The spirits of just men made perfect.*

Now pause, and view the votaries o'er,
Who faithful to the Saviour's lore,
 The Saviour's blessing seek.
The poor in spirit lead the train,
Then they who mourn their inward stain,
 The merciful, the meek :

And here the pure in heart; and here,
Who long for righteousness, appear ;
 And they who peace ensue ;
And they who cast on God their cares,
Nor heed what earthly lot is theirs,
 If they his will can do.

These are the saints, the holy ones,
For whom the Saviour's blood atones ;
 Who, by his Spirit seal'd,
His call with willing mind obey ;
In whom the Father will display
 The bliss to be reveal'd.

Lord, be it mine like them to choose
The better part ; like them to use
 The means thy love hath given :
Be holiness my aim on earth,
That death be welcom'd as a birth
 To life and bliss in heaven !

There, wearing crowns and holding palms,
In " hymns devout and holy psalms "

***The spirits of just men made perfect.* 565**

Those spirits just unite
With thy celestial angel train:
Cleans'd by the Lamb no spots remain,
No speck of earthly mould, to stain
Their robes of dazzling white.

No sounds of woe their joy molest :
No sense of pain disturbs their rest:
No grief is felt within :
But God has wiped away the tear
From every face, and keeps them clear
From anxious doubt, and startling fear,
From sorrow as from sin.

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APPENDIX

THE LIFE OF ST. JOHN THE APOSTLE

CHAPTER I

St. John the Apostle, the son of Zebedee, was one of the twelve apostles of Jesus Christ. He was a fisherman by trade, and was called by Jesus to be an apostle. He was a very close friend of Jesus, and was with Him in the Garden of Gethsemane. He was also one of the three apostles who went to the Mount of Olives with Jesus. He was the only apostle who was not crucified, but died of old age in Ephesus. He was a very important figure in the early Christian Church, and his writings are still read and studied today.

St. John the Apostle was born in Bethsaida, a town on the Sea of Galilee. His father was Zebedee, a fisherman. He had a brother, James, who was also an apostle. St. John was called by Jesus to be an apostle, and he was with Him in the Garden of Gethsemane. He was also one of the three apostles who went to the Mount of Olives with Jesus. He was the only apostle who was not crucified, but died of old age in Ephesus. He was a very important figure in the early Christian Church, and his writings are still read and studied today.

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INDEX II.

OF

FATHERS AND EARLY WRITERS OF THE CHURCH,

CITED OR REFERRED TO.

APOSTOLICAL Constitutions, written about the middle of the fifth century.

Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria forty-six years, from 330 to 375, when he died.

Augustin, Bishop of Hippo in Africa, flourished in the latter part of the fourth century.

Caius, wrote about the year 212.

Chrysostom, Bishop of Constantinople, flourished in the latter part of the fourth century.

Clement of Alexandria, flourished at the end of the second and the beginning of the third century.

Clement of Rome, a contemporary of the Apostles. Bishop of that see nine years, from 93 to 102.

Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, flourished about the middle of the third century.

Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamis in Cyprus, flourished in the latter part of the fourth century.

Eusebius, Bishop of Cæsarea in Palestine, author of the ecclesiastical history from the birth of Christ to the reign of Constantine the Great. He died in the time of Constantine the younger, about the middle of the fourth century.

Gregory Nazianzen, Bishop of Nazianzum in Cappadocia, flourished in the latter half of the fourth century.

Hegesippus, lived immediately after the Apostles. He died in the latter part of the second century.

Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, disciple of St. John the Apostle and Evangelist, died by martyrdom in 111.

Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, when a boy a disciple of Polycarp. He flourished about the middle of the second century.

Jerome, a presbyter of Palestine. He flourished in the latter half of the fourth century.

Justin Martyr flourished soon after the Apostles, being put to death before the middle of the second century.

Nicephorus, Patriarch of Constantinople in the fourteenth century.

Origen, Minister at Caesarea in Palestine, flourished early in the third century.

Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis in Asia. A contemporary of St. John, died at the end of the first or beginning of the second century.

Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, disciple of St. John, suffered martyrdom at the age of eighty-six, about the year 170.

Prudentius, a Christian poet, flourished in the latter part of the fourth century.

Socrates of Constantinople, continued Eusebius's ecclesiastical history, early in the fifth century.

Tertullian, a presbyter of Carthage, flourished at the end of the second and beginning of the third century.

Theodoret, ecclesiastical historian, flourished early in the fifth century.

Theophylact flourished in the eleventh century.

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10. The tenth part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee.



